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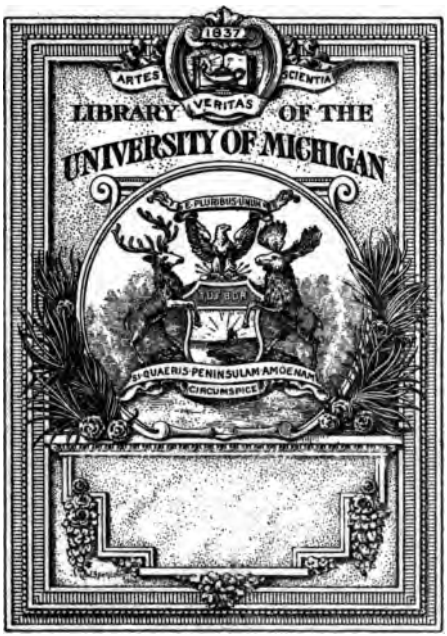
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Outlines

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English Literature

By WILLIAM RENTON

SOMETIME EXTENSION LECTURER TO THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES
AUTHOR OF "THE LOGIC OF STYLE," "BISHOPSPOOL,"
"OILS AND WATERCOLOURS"

WITH DIAGRAMS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1893

University Extension Manuals,

Edited by PROFESSOR KNIGHT.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This Series is primarily designed to aid the University Extension Movement throughout Great Britain and America, and to supply the need, so widely felt by students, of Text-books for study and reference, in connection with the authorised Courses of Lectures. Volumes dealing with separate sections of Literature, Science, Philosophy, History, and Art have been assigned to representative literary men, to University Professors, or to Extension Lecturers connected with Oxford, Cambridge, London, and the Universities of Scotland and Ireland.

The Manuals differ from those already in existence in that they are not intended for School use, or for Examination purposes; and that their aim is to educate, rather than to inform. The statement of details is meant to illustrate the working of general laws, and the development of principles; while the historical evolution of the subject dealt with is kept in view, along with its philosophical significance.

The remarkable success which has attended University Extension in Britain has been partly due to the combination of scientific treatment with popularity, and to the union of simplicity with thoroughness. This movement, however, can only reach those resident in the larger centres of population, while all over the country there are thoughtful persons who desire the same kind of teaching. It is for them also that this Series is designed. Its aim is to supply the general reader with the same kind of teaching as is given in the Lectures, and to reflect the spirit which has characterised the movement, viz., the combination of principles with facts, and of methods with results.

The Manuals are also intended to be contributions to the Literature of the Subjects with which they respectively deal, quite apart from University Extension; and some of them will be found to meet a general rather than a special want.

PREFACE.

IN a review so cursory of a field so extensive as our National Literature, and where the space devoted to one topic or mode of treatment means so much taken from another, care has been observed (1) that the consideration given to an author individually is subordinated to that given him as belonging to a type or school, and the examination of an epoch supported by reference to its position in the history of the Literature as one of organic growth from first to last. (2) Criticism is supplemented by exposition, including those illustrative extracts which are never more indispensable than in an elementary work, whether for exhibiting the fashion of a period or the style of a master. While (3) the importance assigned to a given epoch is in general determined by the number of its authors, and that of the authors by their intrinsic power, a certain discretionary value is allowed to artists in virtue of their historical, scientific, or other extra-literary interest. In no case is favour accorded to a period because

it happens to be ancient, or to an author by reason of his conventional repute.

The Diagrams at the head of each chapter or section are to be understood in the light of the General Plan on the sixth page, of which they are the expansion. With a partial exception in the case of the first, the Poetry in each age is placed to the left of the figure, the Prose to the right; and the treatment proceeds in a similarly uniform manner from Poetry to Prose, the order of historical sequence being preserved as nearly as possible. Where a connecting name in large capitals occurs in the centre of a diagram, the treatment of the authors follows the order of its letters.

The American Literature is considered as an integral part of our own; but in the Appendix will be found a summary of its history and general characteristics, with a conspectus of Scottish and American poetry in relation to English.

RANDAPIKE HOUSE, AMBLESIDE.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

FIRST PERIOD (600—1600).

I. THE OLD ENGLISH METRIC AND CHRONICLE (600—1350) 9

(A) ANGLO-SAXON.

1. Story

Song of *Beowulf.*
Caedmon.
Ealdhelm.
Cynewulf.

2. History, Philosophy, Ethics.

Bede.
Alfred.
Saxon Chronicles.
Aelfric.

(B) ANGLO-NORMAN.

1. Story.

Geoffrey of Monmouth.
Layamon.
Nicholas de Guildford.
Robert Manning.
Robert of Gloucester.

2. History.

Henry of Huntingdon.
William of Malmesbury.
Orderic Vital.

3. Philosophy.

Glanville.
Bracton.
Roger Bacon.
Duns Scotus.
William of Occam.

4. Ethics.

Orm.
Poor.
Rolle.
Langley.
Wiclif.

PAGE

II. THE RENASCENCE (1350—1500) 31

1. Poetry.

English.	*Scottish.*
Ballads.	Barbour.
Gower.	Henryson.
Chaucer.	Dunbar.
Lydgate.	Douglas.
Skelton.	Lindsay.

2. Prose.

Narrative.	Mandeville.
Argumentative.	Pecock.
	Fortescue.
Romantic.	Caxton.
	Malory.

III. THE REFORMATION (1500—1600) 56

1. Poetry.

Stanza-Poets.	Pastoral.		Miscellaneous.
Wyatt.	*Bucolic.*	Tusser.	Daniel.
Surrey.	*Typical.*	Lodge.	Drayton.
Sackville.		Greene.	Drummond.
	Mythical.	Marlowe.	
		Chapman.	
		Shakspere.	
	Dramatic.	Jonson.	
		Fletcher.	
	Allegorical.	Spenser.	

2. Prose-Poetry.

Sidney.
Raleigh.

3. Prose.

Ascham.	Bacon.	Hall.
Cheke.	Hooker.	Burton.
More.		Dekker.
Lyly.		Overbury.

IV. THE ROMANTIC DRAMA (1550—1650) 82

Prologue, MUMMERY, MIRACLE-PLAY, MORALITY, INTERLUDE.

1. Predecessors of Shakspere.

Earlier.		Later.	
Comedy.	Udall.	*Comedy and Tragedy.*	Greene.
Tragedy.	Sackville.	*Tragedy and History.*	Marlowe.
History.	Hughes.	*History and Romance.*	Peele.
Romance.	Edwardes.	*Romance and Comedy.*	Lyly.

2. Shakspere.

PAGE

3. Successors of Shakspere.

Earlier.		Later.	
Psychology and Rhetoric.	Jonson.	*Psychology.*	Ford.
Psychology and Dramaturgy.	Middleton.	*Dramaturgy.*	Webster.
Dramaturgy and Rhetoric.	Chapman.	*Rhetoric.*	Marston.
Dramaturgy and Poetry.	Beaumont and Fletcher.	*Poetry.*	Shirley.
Rhetoric and Poetry.	Massinger.		
Poetry and Psychology.	Dekker.		

SECOND PERIOD (1600—1900).

V. THE SERIOUS AGE (1600—1700) 115

1. Poetry.

Metaphysical.	*Cavalier.*	*Mystical.*
Donne.	Waller.	King.
Cowley.	Carew.	Herbert.
	Suckling.	Quarles.
	Lovelace.	Vaughan.
	Herrick.	Crashaw.

2. Prose-Poetry and Rhetoric.

Milton.	Donne.
Bunyan.	Taylor.
Cowley.	Barrow.
Browne.	South.

3. General Prose.

(1) *Biography, History, and Scholarship.*		(2) *Science.*	(3) *Philosophy.*
Fuller.	Burnet.	Wallis.	Clarke.
Walton.	Clarendon.	Halley.	Hobbes.
Evelyn.	Bentley.	Newton.	Locke.
Pepys.	Atterbury.		Harrington.

VI. THE AGE OF GAIETY (1650—1750) . . . 141

1. Poetry.

Butler.
Dryden.
Prior.
Pope.

2. Drama.

Tragic. Otway.

Comic. Wycherley. Congreve. Vanbrugh. Farquhar.

3. Prose.

Defoe.
Steele.
Addison.
Swift.

PAGE
VII. THE SENTENTIOUS AGE (1700—1800) . . 162

1. Poetry.

Meditative.	*Descriptive and Narrative.*	*Lyric.*
Young.	Thomson.	Burns.
Johnson.	Dyer.	Moore.
Akenside.	Crabbe.	Collins.
Beattie.	Rogers.	Gray.
Goldsmith.	Southey.	Chatterton.
Cowper.	Scott.	Blake.

2. Drama and Novel.

Sheridan.
Goldsmith.
Richardson.
Fielding.
Smollett.
Sterne.

3. Essay.

Rhetoric.	*Philosophy.*	*History.*
Francis.	Reynolds.	Robertson.
Burke.	Hutcheson.	Gibbon.
	Edwards.	
	Berkeley.	
	Smith.	
	Hume.	

VIII. THE SYMPATHETIC AGE (1800—1900) . . 190

1. Poetry of Nature and the Feelings.

Earlier.		Later.	
Nature and Will . .	Byron.	*Nature, Spirit, and Will* . .	Noel.
Nature and Soul . .	Shelley.	*Nature, Will, and Soul* . .	Browning.
Nature and Sense . .	Keats.	*Nature, Soul, and Sense* . .	Swinburne.
Nature and Spirit . .	Wordsworth.	*Nature, Sense, and Spirit* . .	Tennyson.

2. The Novel.

Romantic.—Scott, Dickens. *Critical.*—Thackeray, G. Eliot.

PAGE

3. The Essay.

Philosophy.—Bentham, Ricardo, Malthus, Mill, Paley.
Philosophy and Criticism.—Coleridge.
Criticism and Rhetoric (*a*).—Hazlitt, Lamb, Landor.
Philosophy, Criticism, and Rhetoric.—De Quincey.
Philosophy, Criticism, Rhetoric, and History.—Carlyle.
Criticism, Rhetoric, and History.—Macaulay.
Criticism and Rhetoric (*b*).—Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell.
Rhetoric and History.—Froude.
History.—Prescott, Freeman, Hallam, Grote, Buckle.

4. Science and Art.

Art, Criticism, Economics.—Ruskin.
Economics, Philosophy, Science.—J. S. Mill, Hamilton, Stirling, Spencer, Darwin
Science, Mathematics, Wit.—Thomson, Boole, W. R. Hamilton, Maxwell, De Morgan.
Wit, Poetry, Art.—Punch, Hood, Arnold, Rossetti, Morris.

APPENDIX. Literature of America (1600—1900) . . . 233
Conspectus of British and American Poetry . 241

INDEX 242

INTRODUCTION.

APART from the interest that every one may be supposed to take in the art of his own country, there are two features which make the study of English Literature specially important: the first, that it is the greatest among the literatures of the world, and the second, that as regards the races from which it has sprung it is the most composite.

As usually happens when two remarkable facts are brought together in the same field, an attempt has been made to account for the one by means of the other—in this instance to account for the first by means of the second. Indeed, no one who looks at the map of the United Kingdom, and who knows within what limits to the west the Celtic races generally—Cymric, Pictish, Irish, etc.—have been confined by the successive irruptions of their Teutonic neighbours—Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Scandinavians—can fail to be struck by the fact that a large proportion of the most distinguished names in the literature is to be found precisely along the line of demarcation between the peoples in question, a proportion that in modern times has increased. It is true that along this line have arisen men of the greatest distinction in other departments of intellectual activity; that to such names in Literature as Shakspere, Ruskin, and Macaulay, we have to add those in Art of Hogarth,

Turner, and Burne-Jones, and in Science of Watt, Hamilton, and Faraday. It is also true that there are manifestations of national supremacy in intellect, to which the same explanation does not apply, such as Greek Sculpture and German Music. But it is, nevertheless, an obvious induction from the facts, that the nearer we approach the watershed where the Celt inosculates with the Teuton, the more keen and brilliant is the literary activity.

One circumstance which appears at variance with this conclusion is that the literature of the Celt *per se* has never risen above the primitive order. But we are all familiar with agents which, inert or feeble in themselves, become powerful by combination; as, in chemistry, a gas may become a liquid, a stable substance an unstable, or *vice versâ*. And it would appear as if the Celtic genius, volatile and subtle as it is, not only profited by but demanded the conjunction and modulus of some such influence as the Teutonic. This, at least, is clear, that if the literary superiority of Britain be due to that admixture of the races, no better example could be given of the process we call Natural Selection than this result of successive crossings and intercrossings of members of the same Teutonic family with the original Celtic stock. That element of diversity, on which according to modern biology so much depends for the excellence of the progeny, is found here in a conspicuous degree. In temperament, manner of thought, and mode of expression, no two peoples could better present a type of permanent contrast, or preserve those idiosyncrasies which when stimulated against each other by national rivalry (as in France and Germany) tend only to discord and distrust, but when blended (as in Britain) are the foundation of national stability, whether in action, art, or letters. The masculine tenderness of the Teuton, the

feminine of the Celt; the affection for nature, associated in the Teuton with love of exercise and the open air, in the Celt with spiritual sympathy; the epic impressiveness of the Teuton, and the dramatic effectiveness of the Celt; the elaborate synthesis and detail of the first, with the conciseness and grasp of principle of the other; the complex style of the Teuton and the nervous utterance of the Celt; the mysticism of the Teuton where the Celt is realistic, his seriousness, where the Celt is sportive and fanciful: these are some of the qualities which go to make up the richness of the literature, and are so important in conjunction because so complementary to each other.

To judge by the preponderance of population, we might expect that if either people left its mark upon the Literature rather than the other, this would be the Teutonic. But one of the first things to be noted is that, *notwithstanding the Teutonic preponderance in point of numbers, it is the Celtic genius which predominates in the British Literature.* The flexibility, the conciseness, the symmetry—in particular the delicacy, the brilliancy, and intensity—of the best English work has more in common with the best of French than with the German. One does not indeed put Montaigne on a level with Bacon, nor Molière with Shakspere, nor Balzac with Thackeray; but it is to these authors that we naturally turn for comparison rather than the German philosophers and poets, as it is in French style and syntax that we find the closer correspondence with our own.

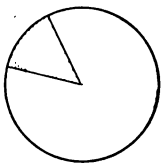
A second point is that, *notwithstanding the predominance in the Literature of the Celtic genius, the preponderance of Words in the language is not Celtic but Teutonic.* In fact the number of words in actual use derived from Celtic sources, such as "cradle," "clan," "brogue," is next to none; and for such words of Celtic though

non-British origin as we do possess, the paradox is made complete by the fact that many of these were introduced into the language from France by a people of Norman, that is, essentially Teutonic, descent.

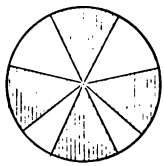
So far, therefore, as Language is concerned, the Literature was not in a condition to develop till the date of the Norman Conquest. Nor, so far as the final fusion of the races is concerned, was it in a condition to develop for more than two hundred years later—the beginning of the English Renaissance. Henceforth it forms its own history, prescribes the laws of its own evolution, and influences the course of events quite as much as it is influenced by them. And therefore the main task of explaining its history, its attempts and its successes, its periods of fulness and depression, devolves upon the Literature itself.

A glance at the Table of Contents, or the General Diagram, which follows on page 6, will show that the Literature as a whole divides into two main Periods—each of which is subdivided into four Ages—the first beginning with the earliest anonymous writings and culminating in the Elizabethan Drama, the second embracing the remainder down to the present day. It will be observed (1) that this division is in accordance with the fact, that the course of the Poetry in particular is marked by two maximum periods of splendour, the Elizabethan and the Victorian, which naturally distributes the literature into two sections, that which precedes Shakspere, and that which is intermediate between him and Tennyson. (2) While every Age is represented in the departments of general Poetry and Prose, those of the first period are represented in these *two* alone, with the exception of the fourth, which introduces the Drama; and similarly the Ages of the Second Period are represented in *three* departments—

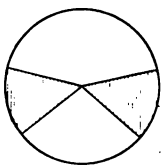
the additional one varying with the Age—with the exception of the fourth, where a further addition is made in the shape of general Science. That (3) several of the Ages overlap each other in time only confirms and illustrates, so far from discrediting, their true historical sequence.



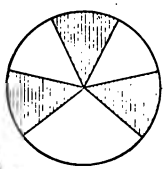
IV. Romantic Drama
(1550–1650)



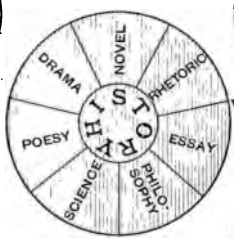
VIII. Sympathetic Age
(1800–1900)

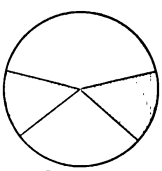


III. Reformation
(1500–1600)

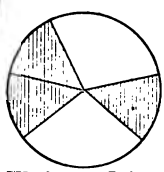


VII. Sententious Age
(1700–1800)

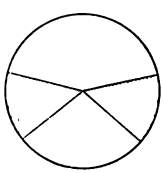




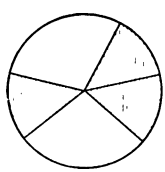
II. Renascence
(1350–1500)



VI. Age of Gaiety
(1650–1750)



I. Old English
(600–1350)
FIRST PERIOD.



V. Serious Age
(1600–1700)
SECOND PERIOD.

GENERAL DIAGRAM.

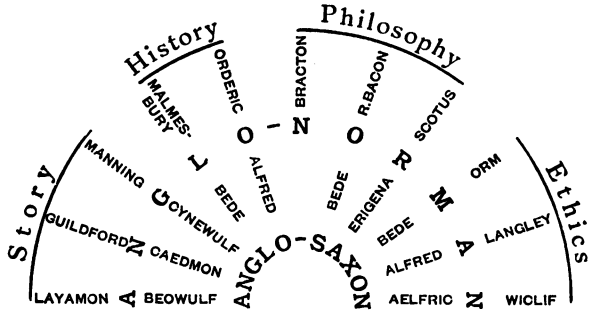
FIRST PERIOD.

(600—1600.)

1.

THE OLD ENGLISH METRIC AND CHRONICLE.

(600—1350.)



THE literature of this Age divides into two, that which precedes and that which follows the Norman Conquest. Previous to that date such of it as was vernacular was either purely Celtic or Anglo-Saxon, the remainder being in Latin. What survives of the former is chiefly the war-poetry of the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Bards, notably of **Taliesin**, who celebrates the defeat of the confederated Cymri by the Teutons at Catterick, in Yorkshire. But as this is fragmentary and confined to the one department of Poesy, it seems proper to name the period after the more complete, the more authentic, and, to our own tongue, more germane literature of the Eastern counties, and speak of it as the Anglo-Saxon Period.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD. (600—1066.)

1. Story.

Apart from philology, there is little to connect the *Traveller's Song*, the *Fight at Finnesburg*, *Deor's Complaint*, and the *Song of Beowulf*, the earliest pieces of Anglo-Saxon literature we possess, with our own. They are not even English in substance, but the work probably of poets and minstrels living on the southern coasts of the Baltic, and perhaps very obscure as to the existence of such a country as Britain; and cannot be said to form the infant stage of the literature so much as the literature in its state of embryo. When the tribes among whom they were current came over and were naturalised in Britain, the poems became naturalised too; but the Language in which they were sung, and of which this is an average specimen,

Bat ban-locan,
Blod edrum dranc,

i.e.,

Bit through the body,
The blood in streams drank,

is scarcely more intelligible to modern readers than the Celtic of the same period. And the Style is almost equally foreign. On the one hand we have the elliptical construction, on the other the tautology; on the one hand the literalness and bareness of the expression, where the feeling demands trope and simile; on the other the use of metaphor, such as "whale-path" for the ocean, where the expression ought to be literal and simple; while the versification not only dispenses with the expedient of Rhyme for the less obvious one of Alliteration, but employs the latter in the form the least suited to utility or ornament. The office of alliteration, like that of rhyme, is two-fold: in the first place to add the pleasure of assonance to the verse, and in the second

to suggest ideas to the composer; and we have only to compare the formal alliteration in the lines just quoted, with Mr. Swinburne's

> From the bountiful infinite west, the happy memorial places
> Full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of the dead,

to see how much is gained in beauty and suggestion by varying both the position and the distance of the repeating consonant.

That the subject of these poems, notably that of *Beowulf*, is Continental, does not of itself mark them out as of Continental origin. But in point of fact they were. The Beowulf of the legend is a Swedish Thane, who comes to assist his neighbour Hrothgar, King of Jutland, against a monster, the Grendel—by some conjectured to represent the devouring, encroaching enmity of the sea. The Grendel mortally wounded, his mother comes to avenge him, whom Beowulf, tracking to her cave at the bottom of a gloomy lake, likewise despatches. Between this act and the next an interval of fifty years is allowed, during which the hero of the piece returns to his own country and ascends the throne; and the curtain rises on his preparation for conflict with another monster, this time a fiery dragon, the poem ending appropriately and dramatically with the death both of the dragon and Beowulf. The closing speech of Beowulf, in which he dwells not only on the extent to which he had raised the national supremacy, but on the fact that he had never laid a snare for an enemy or broken an oath, may seem like an echo from the last declaration of Moses, or the Apostle's "I have fought a good fight—I have kept the faith." But more certainly the self-sacrifice of Beowulf is identified by the latest editor of the poem with the Christian theory of expiation and deliverance; in which case the conclusion of this anonymous work is

the link between the Pagan literature of the Goths and the Christian English, and marks the earliest influence of that Religion which, whether in polity or theory, in ceremonial or practice, was the more powerful of the two first fructifying and guiding impulses on the literature, Chivalry being the other.

Indeed, from the fact that during the Seventh Century, and within a hundred years of Pope Gregory's sending to evangelise England, the literature and scholarship was beginning to be exclusively Christian, we may see how rapidly the new creed was superseding the Saxon mythology in the minds of the people. The reason of the success of Christianity as against Northern religions was that it did, and they did not, possess a doctrinal basis. They had their legend, they had their ritual, they had not its ethical instruction. And this educational superiority was brought to bear upon the class the most susceptible to proselytising influences, viz., the young. The Monasteries, which at first, as in Alexandria, were places of retirement for study and devotion, became seminaries of learning, religious and secular; the Continent was ransacked for manuscripts to enrich the libraries; and English priests took European rank in scholarship and learning. It was thus that the Monastery became the precursor of the University, with the same foundation of libraries, the same collegiate of learned men, engaged partly in teaching, partly in original research, and the same endowment by private beneficence.

Among these benefactors were Hild, the foundress of the monastery of Whitby, and Benedict Biscop, who founded those of Wearmouth and Jarrow—names memorable in the history of University Extension. To Hild it was and at Whitby that **Caedmon** (600—680), a cowherd belonging to the monastery, was brought to

reveal the gift of song which he said had been communicated to him in trance. Hitherto he had been but a dumb poet, shy of taking his part when the harp or *gleebeom* was passed round; but on a passage of Scripture being read out to him he confirmed his statement by turning it into excellent verse, and by Hild's advice entered the monastery as a monk, where he continued his work of improvising upon Scripture themes. From the nature of these, such as the Creation, the Fall, the story of Abraham, the descent of Christ into Hell, it is apparent (1) that his selection is influenced by the doctrinal bearing of the narrative as well as by his own instinct for the dramatic, and (2) that though not incapable of tenderness he prefers those parts of the narrative which encourage a forcible and stirring treatment, to those which are beautiful and pathetic—as in this soliloquy of Satan after his expulsion from heaven:*

Here is a vast fire
Above and underneath;
Never did I see
A loathlier landskip;
The flame abateth not
Hot over hell. . . .
My feet are bound,
My hands manacled,
Of these hell doors are
The ways obstructed,
So that with aught I cannot
From these limb-bonds escape.
About me lie
Huge gratings
Of hard iron,
Forged with heat,
With which me God
Hath fastened by the neck.

By a remarkable coincidence Caedmon appears to be

* Thorpe's translation.

identified with the author of another poem, on the *Rood* or Holy Cross, recently discovered in Italy, from the legend bearing his name still more recently deciphered on the Ruthwell Cross in Scotland, on which part of that poem is inscribed.

If in passing we couple with the name of Caedmon that of **Ealdhelm** (Old Helmet), Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne, who lived a little later and wrote in Latin—poems on Celibacy and the Eight Virtues—we have a type of man who was as ingenious, as scholarly, and as much a man of the world, as Caedmon was simple, rustic, and uneducated.

The lineal successor to Caedmon is **Cynewulf** (8th century), who by a prior right (if the anonymous Saxon poems ascribed to him are his) is successor to the author of *Beowulf*, being secular poet first and religious after; but this is highly improbable. The religious poems (from the Exeter Collection, 1046—1073) are legendary, like the *Andreas*, the *Christ*, the *Passion of St. Juliana*, the *Elene* (finding of the Cross by the Empress Helena), drawn from the same subjects as the pictures of the early Italian painters, and showing here and there the first touches of real imagination. It is thus, for instance, that he makes the Cross speak: *

A rood I stood, and lifted up the great King, Lord of Heaven;
I durst not stoop; they pierced me through with dark nails sharply driven;
The wounds are plain to see here yet, the open wounds that yawn,
Yet nothing nowise durst I do of scathe to any one.
They put us both to shame, us twain; I was bedrenched in blood
Shed from the [spear-torn] heart of Him, when His soul was gone to God.

In his *Riddles* Cynewulf continues a species of litera-

* Miss Hickey's translation.

ture practised by Ealdhelm. This is part of one; the answer being "A bull's horn."

I was an armed warrior. Now a young hero decks me with gold and silver. Men sometimes kiss me. Sometimes I call to battle the willing comrades.

The wit is Teutonic, and the point as blunt as the horn; but the quotation completes the significance of Cynewulf as the coryphaeus or epitome of the poetry of the Anglo-Saxon Age.

Its coryphaeus in the next and wider department of

2. History, Philosophy, and Ethics,

and who may be said to epitomise the literary activity of his successors, as Cynewulf did those of his predecessors, is the Northumbrian **Bede** (673—735). Bede's life at Jarrow was one of great as well as varied activity, for besides his routine duties, his visitation of the sick, his preaching, and teaching in the school, he found time for very extensive, if not very profound or original, research. He wrote in Latin, and for this reason may be called not the father but the GOD-FATHER OF ENGLISH PROSE. But the instinct in him for patient investigation and laborious execution is unmistakably Teutonic. His most valuable work, his most original and the most in keeping with this Teutonic bias, is historical, especially the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People.* Not only is he the sole authority for what we know of that subject and period, but his method is remarkable in an age which was less concerned to treat fact as fact than to turn it into legend; and while posterity may supersede the poetry of the latter, it cannot replace the former, for a barbarous poem is barbarous in spite of its poetry, but a barbarous history is history in spite of its barbarism. The Philosophy of Bede is a digest in forty-five parts of all the arts and sciences known in his time from music to arithmetic;

and by his observations on the tides he appears to have been an experimental philosopher of the modern school. His contributions to Ethics are his Commentary on the Scriptures—drawn from the writings of the Fathers, whose meaning he compares, expands, or condenses in the manner of a modern writer for the press—and his English Translation of the Fourth Gospel. But the most practical part of his work was that connected with English Grammar. Bede was not only scholar but schoolmaster, and as such knew the impossibility of teaching in a language which confounded nouns with adverbs and adjectives, and was destitute of conjunctions. The influence of his grammatical reform upon the language, and through that on the literature, is obvious. But what has not been recognised, and what he himself could not possibly have foreseen, was its influence upon the literature at a most critical period of our history. For had the Saxon maintained its ungrammatical form up to the date of the Norman Conquest, it would have had to compete on unequal terms, especially so far as the higher literature was concerned, with the more favoured Norman-French; and the language of inferior grammatical construction, for which any sudden reform must then have come too late, would have been superseded by the other; precisely as any primitive mode of manufacture is driven out by the introduction of improved plant and machinery.

This work begun by Bede was carried on in letter as in spirit by **Alfred** (849—901) during that revival of scholarship which followed the Danish Invasion, and under the disadvantages of a country disorganised in every detail: the monasteries thrown down, the teachers dispersed, the libraries destroyed by a horde of ruffians who had no more interest in learning than a herd of buffaloes. A man with the gift of command is never so happy as when

he unites to this the art of conciliation, nor so useful as when he combines with both the faculty of organisation. And from Winchester it was—to which the seat of government had been transferred—that Alfred directed the seminaries he had established in various parts of the country, importing teachers from the Continent, and himself teaching a school in his own court. His theory with respect to education may be said to have been twofold: (1) that it should be *permissive*, or open to every freeborn subject without distinction of class, and (2) that it should be *vernacular*, or adapted to the speech and understanding of the common people. And accordingly his own works, mostly translations from the Latin, are written in the Saxon tongue. These are, in History, his translations of *Bede's History* and the *Chronicle of Orosius* (a work on general history and geography by a Spanish monk), and, in Ethics, Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, and the *Consolations of Philosophy* by Boethius.

At Winchester also it was, and during his reign—therefore under his auspices, if not with his assistance—that there began to be compiled in earnest the first of the **Saxon Chronicles**, a record after this date of contemporary events, political as well as ecclesiastical. These records emanate from and bear the names of such monasteries as Winchester, Worcester, St. Albans, and Peterborough, of which the Winchester Chronicle (ending about the year 1000) is the earliest, the Peterborough (ending in 1154) the latest and most valuable. As might be expected in so long a series, they vary in dignity and animation; but it may be observed, in instance of the continuity of ecclesiastical history, that the towns just mentioned are still the sees of English bishops.

At Winchester finally, and in the next century (for we need not do more than mention the philosopher **Erigena**),

was educated **Aelfric** (about 1000), Abbot of Eynsham, the firstfruits of that second revival of scholarship which followed the wars with the Scots and Welsh, and the most finished prose writer of Saxon times. His work was theological, a translation of the earlier books of the Old Testament, and three series of Homilies, the last being on the lives of English Saints, in which he occasionally makes use of rhythm, a species of literature and an artifice between which we shall find a more intimate connection in the succeeding period. This passage from the work last mentioned, describing the finding the head of the saintly King Edmund, who had been killed by the Danes, may serve as a specimen of his style and subject.

Then after a while, when they were gone, came the country-folk to where their lord's body was lying without the head, and were exceeding sorry for his slaying in their hearts, and also that they were without the head to the body. They went then at length all to the wood, seeking everywhere through shrubs and brambles if they anywhere might come upon the head. There was also a great marvel, that a wolf was sent through God's providence to protect the head against other wild beasts day and night. They went then seeking and often calling, as is usual for those who go through the woods, "Where art thou now, companion?" And the head answered them, "Here, here, here," till they all came, through the calling, to it. There lay the grey wolf that guarded the head, and with his two feet had the head clasped, greedy and hungry, and through God he durst not taste the head, but kept it from the wild beasts.

ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD. (1066—1350.)

There was this difference between the Norman Invasion and the other interruptions which, like inundating waters, occupied the depressions between Bede and Alfred, Alfred and Aelfric, that it began rapidly to exercise an alluvial and fertilising influence upon the literature. It was in despite of the Danes that the literature had sur-

vived, it was because of the Normans that the literature was to flourish. And the first results of this alluvial deposit were seen in its Poetry.

1. Story.

Besides the number of New Words contributed to the language, words relating to the chase and the kitchen, to chivalry and the learned professions—such as "quarry," "mutton," "captain," "relic"—and the art of Rhyme, the Conquest had introduced to the literature the whole cycle of French Romance, which became naturalised in Norman England, as the Teutonic romances in Anglo-Saxon. And not merely the cycle but the spirit; for the interest awakened by French chivalry and legend extended at once to the classical romances of the East and the British of the West. So that for Beowulf we have the romances of Roland and Charlemagne; for the legends of Oriental patriarchs, apostles, and martyrs, we have those of Alexander and the Fall of Troy; for the older and more isolated Welsh and Irish legends, the series of Arthur and the Round Table.

Of those three cycles—French, Classical, and British—the last is connected with the first through the legend, *e.g.*, of Tristram; with the second, in a very curious and arbitrary manner, through the story of Brutus, the "great-grandson" of Aeneas. For nothing would serve the nations of Europe at this epoch but that they must have been descended from some fabulous person, and to such a pitch was this carried that the Greeks themselves claimed Trojan origin. So that the Welsh priest **Geoffrey of Monmouth** was only following the fashion in assuming descent for his countrymen from the hero in question. His Latin prose work, the *History of the Britons*, culled from history, tradition, and fable, and never more circumstantial than when most mendacious, was as popular

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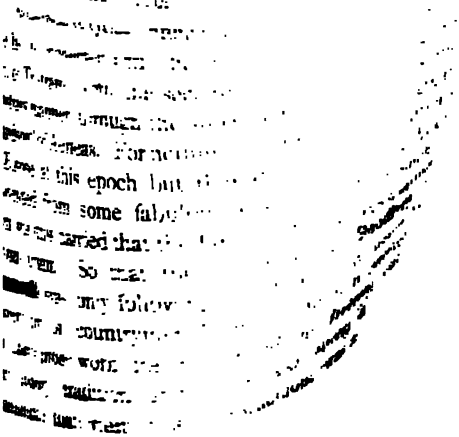

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with general readers as it was distasteful to the genuine historians. As one result of which popularity it was translated into Norman-French by a Jersey priest named Wace, author of the "Roman de Rou," under the title of *Roman de Brut*; and here another curious thing happened. As a man has been known to buy a horse at a fair, and so doctor it as to be able to sell it back at a higher price to the unsuspecting owner, this historical novel of Geoffrey, re-translated from Wace into English, and enlarged into twice its size by the Worcestershire priest **Layamon**, reappeared within sixty years, almost a stone's throw from its birthplace, under the title of *The Brut*. Among the new material was the legend of the Round Table, and the frequent though not constant use of both rhyme and alliteration gives effect and novelty to the verse:

Ich wulle varen to Avalun
to vairest alre maidene
to Argante ðere quene
alven swiðe sceone,
and heo scal mine wunden
makien alle isunde
al hal me makien
mid haleweiȝe drenchen.
And seoðe ich cumen wulle
to mine kineriche
and wunien mid Brutten
mid muchelere wunne.
Æfne ðan worden
ðer com of se wenden
ðat wes an sceort bat liðen
and twa wimmen ðerinne
wunderliche idihte;
and heo nomen Arthur anan
and aneouste hine vereden
and softe hine adun leiden
and forð gunnen hine liðen.

I will go to Avalun
To the fairest of all maids,
To Argante the queen,
Fairy exceeding fair,
And she shall my wounds
Make all sound,
All whole me make
With healing drinks.
And after I will come
Unto my kingdom
And dwell with Britons
With much delight.
Even at the words
There came from sea wending
What was a short boat sailing
And two women therein
Wonderfully bedight;
And they took Arthur anon
And straight away carried
And soft him down laid
And forth set away to sail.

For his imaginative feeling and the freedom of his verse Layamon is accounted the first poet of his time. In his combined use of rhyme and alliteration he may be said to mark the transition from the Anglo-Saxon poets to the more elegant **Nicholas de Guildford,** author of the poem in dialogue *The Owl and the Nightingale*, in which each bird asserts its superiority in song and reviles the other, the dispute being submitted to the poet, who is apparently unable to decide. The theme is modelled upon those of the French Troubadours, the spirit is dramatic, not epic, and from the quotation it will be seen that alliteration is neglected for regular rhyme.

Ich was in one sumere dale
In one swiðe diȝele hale
I-herde ich holde grete tale
An ule and one niȝtingale ;
Ðat plait was stif and starc and strong,
Sum wile softe, and lud among :

And aiðer aȝen oðer swal
And let ðat vule mod ut al.
Ðe niȝtingale begon ðe speche
In one hurne of one beche
And sat up one vaire boȝe,
Ðar were abute blosme i-noȝe
In one waste ðicke hegge
I-meind mid spire and grene segge.

Some ten years after this poem appeared was born in Lincolnshire Robert Manning, commonly called **Robert of Bourne** (born 1260?), a chronicler in verse like Layamon, but using the same metre and rhyme as Nicholas of Guildford, though less of a poet than the latter, and noticeable chiefly because the East-Midland dialect in which he wrote is not only more akin to our own than that of the other poets of the period, but has become the basis of our modern speech and literature.

His *Handlyng Synne* was a recast from the French "Manuel des Péchés" of another English monk, treating of the seven deadly sins and other religious topics, with appropriate illustrations, and connects Robert with the Ethical writers of the period; as the rhyming English Chronicle of **Robert of Gloucester** connects him with the Historians.

2. History.

Among the genuine histories made use of by the latter, as opposed to the romances of Geoffrey, are those of **Henry of Huntingdon** and **William of Malmesbury** (1095—1143). The latter is the beau-ideal of an early historian. To learning and the love of research he adds a critical temper and gift of selection, a clear method of narration and a firm and incisive style. A monk, he writes as a man of the world; the offspring of an illiterate age, and addressing a very narrow circle of readers, he writes with the accuracy and scrupulous revision of one correcting for the press and addressing the world at large. This is a summary of the character of William II. from his principal work, the *History of the Kings of England.*

Greatness of soul was pre-eminent in the king, which in process of time he obscured by excessive severity; vices, indeed, in place of virtues, so insensibly crept into his bosom, that he could not distinguish them. . . . At first, so long as Archbishop Lanfranc survived, he abstained from every crime; so that it might be hoped he would be the very mirror of kings. After his death for a time he showed himself so variable, that the balance hung even betwixt vices and virtues. At last, however, in his latter years, the desire after good grew cold, and the crop of evil increased to ripeness; his liberality became prodigality, his magnanimity pride, his austerity cruelty. I may be allowed, with permission of the royal majesty, not to conceal the truth; for he feared God but little, man not at all.*

Orderic Vital was English by early education, though

* Bohn's translation.

of French descent, and became a monk of the Abbey of St. Evroult, in Normandy, from the fine library of which he derived the materials of his *Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy.*

3. Philosophy.

Meanwhile, in a department closely allied to History and in a similar spirit, **Glanville** (Henry II.) and **Bracton** (Henry III.) were laying the foundations of Constitutional Law. The title under which they both wrote, *The Laws and Customs of England*, may remind us that "law" in its early stages partakes a good deal of the nature of "custom"; so that while Glanville, the elder, devotes himself more to the customs—the practice of justice and the forms of procedure—Bracton devotes himself more to the system of law.

The Science of the day was less advanced. In its inability to account for the more complex, and often the simplest, facts of nature, it developed theories which were as far from philosophy as the romances of the chroniclers from history. But if **Roger Bacon** (1214—1292) was not free from that charlatanism of his predecessors, the Arabian mathematicians, by which he pretended that his telescope enabled him to see into time as well as space; if he considered the arts which imposed upon the vulgar as the perquisites of the man of science, it was not for want of original scientific insight, or knowledge of the principle on which all scientific discovery is based. He was acquainted, for example, with the principle of the telescope and the microscope, and the properties of steam and gunpowder; and was an apostle of the one scientific dogma, that all philosophy to be in earnest must be experimental. His office as a Franciscan, which very nearly prevented his composing at all (for except by special dispensation members of

that Order were forbidden the use of pen and ink), procured him the sobriquet of "Friar" Bacon, under which he survives as a figure of mediæval legend and literature, given to alchemy and in league with the devil.

The spirit of the age was more indulgent to speculative Schoolmen like those other Franciscans, **Duns Scotus** (*d.* 1308) and **William of Occam.** Scotus, who was called the Subtle Doctor, maintained—and was followed by Occam in maintaining—as against St. Thomas Aquinas, that the distinction between the separate faculties of the mind was nominal and not real: reasoning which involves the fallacy,

> Imagination is a faculty of mind;
> Memory is a faculty of mind;
> ∴ Memory is Imagination.

He lectured with great success at Oxford (as well he might), and was translated to Toulouse, where he sustained the Immaculate Conception in no less than two hundred arguments, which we may presume to have been "nominally" and not "really" distinguished from each other.

4. Ethics.

The more practical bent of Occam connects him with that group of Homilists of whom the Augustine Canon **Orm** was chief. His book, the *Ormulum*, consisted of a metrical paraphrase and application of the Gospel in the Church service for every day in the year; or, as he himself puts it:

> Icc hafe sammnedd o ðis boc
> Ða Goddspelless neh alle
> Ðatt sinndenn o ðe messeboc
> Inn all ðe ȝer att messe,
> And agg affter ðe Goddspell stannt
> Ðatt tatt te Goddspell meneðð.

And it will be noticed that the rhythm of Aelfric's prose homily appears here as regular metre, though without rhyme.

Another book of the same type, but in prose, and more interesting from its quaint union of almost penal discipline with devotional tenderness, is the *Ancren Riwle*, written for the "rule" or guidance of a small sisterhood of "anchorites" in Dorsetshire, by Bishop **Poor** of Salisbury. We find, for example, such restrictions as these, that a Sister's domestic pets were to be limited to one cat; that she was neither to send letters nor receive them on her own responsibility, and was to have her hair cropped four times a year. And a century later we have the *Pricke of Conscience*, by **Rolle**, the Hermit of Hampole (1290—1349), dealing with life and death, heaven and hell, and written both in metre and rhyme.

These, with Metrical Creeds, Lives of Saints, and other manuals of devotion, form the literature of practical duty up to the middle of the fourteenth century, by way either of incentive or correction. But they were either too special or too general, too trivial or too vague. The work of Poor was directed to a class, not only of the smallest, but who stood least in need of religious guidance; Orm was more earnest to have the service read in correct Saxon than to bring home iniquity to any sinner or body of sinners, though caught *en flagrant délit*. And the worst was that not a few of the most flagrant delinquents were to be found in the religious bodies themselves. No longer did the monk vary his literary labours by teaching the catechumens, by doing the household drudgery, baking the bread, and feeding the calves. Accustom the average man to relieve his serious duties with worldly pleasure, and he will gravitate to pleasure altogether, as surely as sparks fly upward or stones fall downward. When the Monasteries became too openly corrupt, suffer-

ing from that complication of disorders which is known as having too much leisure, too much money, and too much inclination to make a bad use of both, the thirteenth century had seen a dynasty of reformers arise in the Friars, only to succumb to the same temptations; the special privileges granted to the latter in return for voluntary poverty, their learning and diplomatic influence, leading only to heresy and political intermeddling, while the lower types of them became as dissolute as the monks. Any reformation, therefore, proceeding from the side of the clergy might have seemed self-condemnatory and invidious. But the history of all reformation has shown that to be serious any protest against the abuses of a prevailing system must not only have the support of those who suffer by that system, and the countenance of other reforms against abuses having a common root with it, but proceed immediately from those who have been brought up in and bound apprentice to it. The first of these conditions was fulfilled in the growing sense among the lower orders that property ought not to be all in the hands of the few, nor the burdens of the state fall so heavily on the heads of the many. The second was fulfilled in **Langley** and **Wiclif**. These were the levers by which the oppression was to be removed, the fulcrum being the body of the people; for diverse in method and temper as were these men, they were equally alive to the fact that the mass to be relieved was itself the fulcrum: in other words, it was not only *for* the people but *by* the people that they hoped to make their opposition effective. Hence Langley's writing his Poem in homely English, hence Wiclif's Translation of the Scriptures.

A protest of this kind may be either apocalyptic or apostolic, in the style of the Book of Revelation or of the Epistle to the Romans. Langley's *Vision of Piers Plowman* is of the former type. It is an exhibition of

the worldly-mindedness and insincerity of the time, an expression of the hopelessness of finding any form of life corresponding to the scriptural ideal.

Its form is allegorical. Like greater masters of the art, Langley represents himself as falling asleep; his Patmos or Bedford Gaol the Malvern Hills. And in his dream he pictures a field crowded with figures, each intent upon worldly business, and chiefly of the specious and intriguing classes — beggars, friars, indulgence-sellers, lawyers, tradesmen, taverners—a perfect Vanity Fair. Then the dream narrows to episode. The Church appears as a beautiful lady and points out Falsehood about to be married to Unjust Reward; Theology objects, and the case is tried at Westminster before the King, who suggests that Reward should marry Conscience, but Conscience objecting, Reason is called in in support of Justice, whom the King prays to be his guide for the future. The curtain then rises again on the vagrant multitude, with Reason preaching to them, and the fine episode of the conversion of the Seven Deadly Sins, with the special form repentance takes in each case; the appearance of Piers Plowman—typical at once of the class the poet had most in his sympathy and his sincerity of aim—to guide the multitude in their search for Truth; the bill of pardon from Truth for certain offenders, and the dispute with the priest for it, which wakes the author from his dream.

Like all true allegory, the Vision is an epic which touches upon the dramatic. A very pretty episode occurs during the trial scene at Westminster, after the entry of Reason with Wit and Wisdom, when, Peace appearing with a complaint against Wrong, Wrong by means of Unjust Reward bribes Wit and Wisdom to take his view of the case. And whether this interlude is the result of simplicity or design, it could not have been bettered by

a playwright, or be made to throw a richer interest on the plot. Nevertheless Bunyan, if he had made Wrong able to bribe Wit from the side of Reason, would hardly have made Wisdom—though he might have made Learning—follow suit; and he certainly would not have confused the allegory by references to real places and events like Westminster or the recent pestilences. Also his characters are more solid, having the same relation to Langley's that statuary has to bas-relief, or oil-painting to fresco. He is at once more pure in the ideal, more massive in the real. But it was the *first* great merit of Langley's work that, despite its crudeness and alliterative style, it combined in so high a degree allegorical feeling with vivid, pointed, often pungent touches of realistic description like this (the spelling is modernised):

> And then came Covetise, can I him not descrive,
> So hungrily and hollow Sir Hervey him looked;
> He was beetle-browed and babour-lipped both,
> With two bleared eyen as a blinde hag,
> And as a leathern purse lolled his cheeks,
> Well syder than his chin, they shriveled for eld;
> And as a bondman of his bacon his beard was bedrivelled,
> With an hood on his head and a lousy hat above.

Langley's *second* merit is that with the indignation and didactic purpose of the reformer he combines a keen instinct for natural beauty. It is clear from his presenting Unjust Reward under the guise of a beautiful lady that he has no objection to represent evil as a thing of outward comeliness, where this may suit his story; and the idyllic feeling of the poem—the "soft" summer sunshine which envelops it, his sleep "forwandred" on the hills—is of the old Hebraic type, whose bitter and melancholy wrath is tempered by its instinct for pastoral beauty.

If Langley was apocalyptic, Wiclif was apostolic; if Langley's protest was of the passive type, Wiclif's was

active and militant; if Langley pointed out the difference between the present *practice* of the Church and its original, Wiclif pointed out the difference between its present *creed* and its original. There ought to have been no such difference; and just as Langley had shown that the actual practice was in *defect* of the original, so Wiclif was interested to show that the actual creed, by reason of its corruptions and interpolations, was in *excess*. At once more logical and more combative than Langley, Master of Balliol College in Oxford, and the most practised disputant of his day, it was easy for him to demonstrate the extent of these interpolations. But quite another thing was to get the High Church party to acknowledge that this had been done; and as the party most interested in the result of the controversy, viz., the common people, were unable to form an opinion on its merits through not having the gospel in a tongue they could understand, it became his business to translate it and so make them witnesses and judges in the case. The translation was not executed in the most scholarly manner, as some parts of this extract will show; but it was remarkably clear and idiomatic, and helped to fix the prose form of the language and literature down to the present time.

And Marye seyde, My soul magnifieth the Lord.

And my spiryt hath gladid in God myn helthe.

For he hath behulden the mekenesse of his handmayden; for lo for this alle generatiouns schulen seye that I am blessid.

For he that is mighti hath don to me grete thingis, and his name is holy.

And his mercy is fro kyndrede into kyndredis to men that dreden him.

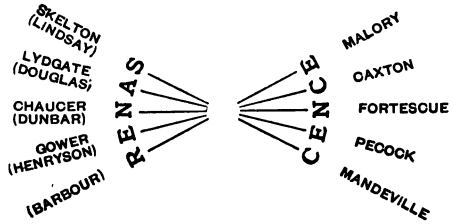
He hath made myght in his arm, he scatteride proude men with the thoughte of his herte.

He sette doun myghty men fro seete, and enhaunside meke men. He hath fulfillid hungry men with goodis, and he has left riche men voide.

Wiclif's pamphlets against the Friars are slovenly in composition, if we are to judge by his tautology; and it is curious that a man of education should have profited so little from classical models in respect of the one point they were specially qualified to teach. In prose he cannot be said to do more than continue the work begun by Bede, as Langley continues that of Caedmon. But the appearance of both men marks the decay of the monastic influence upon the literature, and with it the decay of any special *extra*-literary influence, ecclesiastical or otherwise. So much of the best work done by the monk that was not educational was simply stolid—the product of men resigned to fate, accustomed to hardship, accomplished in self-denial—that it is to other quarters we must look for the inspiration of English literature than those Northumbrian moors, whose only fostering influences were the blinding sea-mist and its bitter rain.

II.

THE RENASCENCE (1350—1500).



THIS age may be called the Renascence, partly because of its relation to the new birth of the Literature, partly because of its association with the Italian Renaissance, whose influence succeeded that of the Norman-French Romances. Since the days of Layamon and Nicholas de Guildford a new set of classics had arisen in Europe. The literature of Italy, which had been the last to flourish in ancient times, was now the most flourishing of modern, with its centre transferred from Rome to Florence, and Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the heirs of Virgil, Catullus, and Ovid respectively. To the average Englishman of to-day Italy is little more than a haunt of brigands and opera-singers; but to Chaucer and his contemporaries it was a land of promise, its art regarded with the deference, the enthusiasm, the absence of conscious rivalry, with which a younger sister looks upon an older; and though Dante died before Chaucer was born, Petrarch and Boccaccio were still in the vigour of that activity which has left its mark upon English verse.

1. Poetry.

A glance at the diagram will show (1) that the Verse, which is contemporaneous with the Prose, surpasses it both in the quality and quantity of its leading names, and (2) that it runs in two parallel series, English and Scottish, taken in order of time; the poets thus aligned two by two happening to be those which have most affinity with each other in style or literary merit.

English Poets.— In Langley's "Vision" mention is made of the Rhyming Ballads *Robin Hood* and *Randolph Earl of Chester*, not published till long after his time, but which, as tales of local heroism, may stand in the same category with Barbour's more elaborate poem, "The Bruce," presently to be noticed.

These Ballads are, of course, distinct from the *Balades*, a metrical form as precise as the Sonnet, and adopted from the French, of which **Gower** (1325—1408) wrote a collection of Fifty in his youth. They are, perhaps, the finest of his literary work, if we are to judge by such specimens as the thirty-sixth (part of which I have translated), with its refrain, *Quencontre amour n'est qui poet dire : Nai.*

For to compare this jocund hour of May,
I'll say it is a paradise of hours:
The thrush is singing and the popinjay,
The fields are green, the grass is fresh with showers,
Nature is queen of every woodland way,
Not Venus' self more blest among the bowers.
No man of woman born may love gainsay.

When this I see, and think, as well I may,
How nature has surprised this world of ours,
For which the time makes music and is gay,
And I, the lonely witness of her powers,
Who without friends am made the friend of flowers,
It is no marvel if I vow to-day,
No man of woman born may love gainsay.

Go, tell Her whom the queen of beauty dowers,
Tell, Ballad, where I send thee far away,
That I have learned in sooth these weary hours,
No man of woman born may love gainsay.

It is therefore unfortunate that no copy exists of his other French poem, the *Speculum Meditantis*, of which we only know that it was a religious work and treated of the manner in which transgressors might be brought to repentance. His second large poem, *Vox Clamantis*, is an account of the insurrection of the Commons in 1381, and was written in Latin, for the presumed reason that Gower, who was so far in sympathy with the movement as to reprobate the corruptions which caused it, did not wish to make his sentiments too intelligible to the masses, who might be inclined to push it to excess. His third and most famous poem, the *Confessio Amantis*, was written in English. It is the "Confession of a Lover" to a priest of Venus; but the priest is a very harmless priest, and the lover a very innocent lover; for after the first introduction of himself and his difficulties, and when the priest with much subdivision and illustration proceeds to catechise him as to his footing with the Seven Deadly Sins, it is found that he has just so much delinquency to confess and no more as is necessary to give point to the plot and interest to the story. The mechanism of these tales, as a series having a common incident for nucleus—in the way one might take any piece of paper to wind a ball of worsted on—was borrowed from the Italian; and Boccaccio's Decameron, founded on the incident of a party of ladies and gentlemen frightened out of Florence by the plague, and story-telling to beguile the time, had taken too rapid a hold of the popular fancy not to find imitators. Gower's device of the confessional was less obvious, and, like the stories which it gives him the opportunity of telling, more in

accordance with his own didactic vein; though some of the tales themselves are from Boccaccio, the rest being taken from a variety of sources, chiefly Ovid and the classics. Of all the poets of this cultured age Gower was the most learned, and his learning included more than scholarship, as we have seen that his scholarship included more than criticism, viz., the power to compose in languages other than his own. Of his earnest, simple, often elegant style in English verse this may be given as a specimen:

> My son, an ypocrite is this—
> A man which feigneth conscience
> As though it were al innocence
> Without, and is nought so withinne;
> And doth so, for he wolde winne
> Of his desire the vein estate:
> And whan he cometh anon thereat,
> He showeth thanné what he was;
> The corne is tornéd into gras,
> That was a rose is than a thorne,
> And he that was a lamb beforne
> Is than a wolfe.

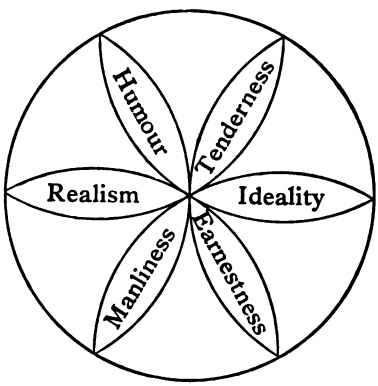
Gower was both clergyman and country gentleman; and as it is in his didactic character that he resembles Langley, it is in his mundane that he approaches **Chaucer** (1340—1400). Chaucer was more than a man of the world: he was a courtier and a man of business. Born, like Mr. Ruskin, the son of a London vintner, he served his apprenticeship to life in the household and army of Edward III.; was entrusted with various diplomatic missions abroad, on one of which he made the acquaintance of Petrarch, and possibly of Boccaccio; was appointed Comptroller of Customs and Clerk of the King's Works; and died at his house in Westminster, the first of English literary men who was buried in the Abbey. The poems by or ascribed to him fall into two nearly

equal sections, the Minor Poems and the *Canterbury Tales*. To those which show traces of foreign influence belong the *Romaunt of the Rose*, an unfinished translation of the fine work of Jean de Meung, the *pièce de résistance* of French Romance; the allegorical *Court of Love*; the courtly *Boke of the Duchesse*, on the deceased wife of John of Gaunt; the courtly allegorical *Assembly of Foules*, in honour of some royal wedding, and the earlier of the Canterbury Tales. To those whose inspiration is more purely English belong the remainder of the Tales, *The House of Fame*, and *The Legend of Good Women*.

The plot of the Canterbury Tales is more skilful than Boccaccio's. It is more skilful because more suggestive, and more suggestive because more typical of the life of the time. It was the age of Pilgrimages; and at the Tabard Inn in Southwark Chaucer represents a mixed company of Pilgrims assembled, intent on journeying on the morrow to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, the host proposing that they should beguile the journey by telling tales, and proffering himself as guide. This at once gives opportunity of delineating the various classes of pilgrims, and assigning tales suitable to each, with the central figure of the landlord as commentator and master of ceremonies; so that the artist is happy in the skeleton he has chosen, as of a higher type of vertebrate than his predecessor's. And if the substance of that skeleton is not Chaucer's, for the tales are borrowed from many sources, ancient and modern, English and foreign, the tissue with which he has clothed it, the character, the humour, the sympathy, are entirely his own.

(1) Its first quality is its Realism. Chaucer was a draughtsman from the life, not from the cast. And so generous was the vein that the narrators of the Tales,

whom it was the custom to leave conventional and subordinate, become as vivid and interesting as the characters they describe. The knight, the squire, the bailiff, the nun, the pardoner with his wallet full of indulgences hot from Rome, the merchant with his measurely dignity, meant to bespeak him a man of substance while he is in debt and at his wits' end for money, are as goodly specimens of the characters swimming in the life of that time as any mixed company



of fish that ever found themselves in the same basket with the salt and freshness of the sea still upon them; and the description is realistic to correspond. The squire's beard is white as a daisy, the miller's broad and like a spade, the merchant-captain's shaken by many a tempest; the Prioress's French is of the Cockney school, the Friar's English affected with a lisp. It may be by accident that Chaucer is so specific as to make this Friar a Limitour, or one whose begging is limited to a certain district; but when we read of his cape of double-worsted, and the Merchant's Flanders beaver,

we feel that these technicalities are the niceties of an artist who does nothing without design and whose design is nothing if not circumstantial. (2) None the less is the realism preserved against vulgarity by his complementary Ideality, or instinct for beauty: beauty in all things animate and inanimate, flowers and sunshine, gold and fine apparel, men and women. No poet has surpassed Chaucer in the purely sensuous love of beauty. The carpenter's wife at Oxford is slender and supple as a weasel; the lady in the *Court of Love* has a lily-white well-moulded forehead, a small mouth, not over-red, but "with pregnant lips thick to kiss." But it is an instinct for beauty in which the sensuous shades into the spiritual, and symbolically unites the small mouth, the broad forehead, and luminous grey eyes of the Prioress with her high-bred courtesy and charity. The small mouth denotes reserve and refinement, the forehead intellect and calm judgment, the eye soul and feeling; but it is only when he treats of the manner that he comes to the most spiritual of the physical gifts. For it is not colour, the most obvious and sensuous of such, nor even form, but expression, that the artist prizes, and that appeals only to the soul of those who have eyes to see; and in the Prioress we have a figure instinct with courtesy from head to foot, as the symbol of that charity which includes courtesy as its most visible expression. Hence it is (3) that Chaucer's ideality is so closely allied to his Earnestness. There are times when he shows himself more sternly didactic than Gower, as in the Tale of Meliboeus; a more systematic theologian than Wiclif, as in the Parson's Homily; and of his finely balanced moral sense there could not be a more perfect specimen than the Parson himself. So many of his characters drawn from the religious orders, like the pardoner, the hunting monk, and the friar, are of a scampish cast,

that he comes in time to balance the account with this meek, silent priest:

> A good man ther was of religioun,
> That was a poure persone of a toun:
> But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
> He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
> That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche,
> His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
> Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
> And in adversite ful patient:
> And swiche he was ypreved often sithes,
> Ful loth were him to cursen for his tithes,
> But rather wolde he yeven out of doute,
> Unto his poure parishens aboute,
> Of his offring, and eke of his substance.
> He coude in litel thing have suffisance.
> Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder,
> But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
> In sikenesse and in mischief to visite
> The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
> Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf.
> This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
> That first he wrought, and afterward he taught. . . .
> And though he holy were and vertuous,
> He was to sinful men not dispitous,
> Ne of his speeche dangerous ne digne,
> But in his teching discrete and benigne.

A whole shelf of homilies may convey less ethical teaching than this simple description. Nor is anything more remarkable in the drawing of this priest than his power of sharp rebuke,

> But were it any persone obstinat,
> What so he were of highe or low estat,
> Him would be snibben sharply for the nones;

especially when we remember how Chaucer's didactic vein is relieved and held in check (4) by his Humour, a humour that in all its phases—shy, sly, genial, jovial, racy—is never cynical and never forced.

There was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
Hire gretest othe n'as but by Seint Eloy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service devine,
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte bowe.

(5) In this portrait of the Prioress humour is closely allied to Chaucer's characteristic Tenderness—most conspicuous in the story of Griselda, a peasant girl raised to be the wife of her territorial lord, who, to put a test upon her patience, takes her children from her, tells her that he proposes to take another wife, and she must return to her father's house.

And she agen answerd in patience:
My lord, quod she, I wote, and wist alway,
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight ne can ne may
Maken comparison, it is no nay;
I ne held me never digne in no manere
To be your wif, ne yet your chamberere.

My lord, ye wote, that in my fadres place
Ye dide me stripe out of my poure wede,
And richely ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I nought elles out of drede,
But faith, and nakednesse, and maidenhede;
And here agen your clothing I restore,
And eke your wedding ring for evermore.

The remenant of your jeweles redy be
Within your chambre, I dare it safly sain;
Naked out of my fadres hous (quod she)
I came, and naked I mote turne again.

(6) This tenderness, while it helps to preserve earnestness against severity, is itself preserved from sentimentalism by Chaucer's habitual Masculine Sense. And

if we are to take the aforesaid scheme of qualities as symbolical of what is best in English poetry, we may have an idea of his position from the fact that he alone with Shakspere and Tennyson has reached that balance and combination of faculties which it represents.

It is also to be noted that his style, like Shakspere's and Tennyson's, corresponds in variety to his faculty. So that if directness of style corresponds to realism of treatment, elegance to ideality, ease to humour, sustainedness to earnestness, the sympathetic to tenderness, and solidity to masculine sense, we have Chaucer repeated in his verse. To Metre he has contributed his own Heroic Stanza:

Fle fro the pres, and duelle with soothfastnesse ;	*a*
Suffice the thy good, though hit be smale,	*b*
For horde hath hate, and clymbyng tikelnesse ;	*a*
Pres hath envye, and wele is blent over alle ;	*b*
Savour no more than the behove shalle ;	*b*
Do well thyself that other folke canst rede,	*c*
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit ys no drede.	*c*

This stanza is formed from the Italian *abababcc*, by the omission of the fifth line, which relieves the monotony of alternate rhymes.

That Chaucer introduces himself as one of the characters in the Tales, and mentions by name the Tabard Inn and its host, as one certain of his privilege to turn the taking of a liberty into the conferring of a favour, marks a distinct advance in the literary consciousness of the time, the parent, or it may be the child, of literary conscientiousness. A second evidence of the same professional consciousness is found in the general reverence for Chaucer, and recognition of his supremacy, among his fellow-artists—the *esprit de corps* which makes one of them call him "the lode-star of our language," another, "universal fader in science" (*i.e.*, literary art),—

and it is to the latter that we are indebted for our only portrait of him. This was **Occleve** (1370—1454), the moral poet, and the work in which it was found is a manuscript copy of his *Gouvernail of Princes.* A third piece of evidence is the practice among authors like **Lydgate** (1373—1460) of writing on commission. Professional work of this sort has mainly sunk to the level of verse-writing for the music-hall and the advertising tradesman, and is connected with Lydgate's only through the pieces written on state occasions; but Lydgate was as ready to compose a poem to order as a lawyer to draw up a settlement, whether the occasion were civic or personal, secular or religious, and the subject a masque, a May-game, or other form of mummery. He was a monk who had travelled and seen the world, and could be didactic or entertaining, brief or lengthy at will. His longer poems are translations or paraphrases from the works of Italian writers: the *Fall of Princes*, a tale of all the illustrious personages in history who have come to misfortune, the *Storie of Thebes* from Boccaccio, and the *Troy Boke*, or story of Troy, from Guido di Colonna. His lyric style is easy, and his descriptive touch excellent.

Tyll at the last, among the bowes glade,
Of adventure, I caught a pleasaunt shade;
Ful smothe, and playn, and lusty for to sene,
And softe as velvette was the yonge grene:
Where from my hors I did alight as fast,
And on a bowe aloft his reyne cast.
So faynte and mate of werynesse I was,
That I me layd adowne upon the gras,
Upon a brincke, shortly for to telle,
Besyde the river of a cristall welle;
And the water, as I reherse can,
Like quicke-sylver in his streames yran,
Of which the gravell and the bryghte stone,
As any golde, agaynst the sun yshone.

Skelton, who was more of a deliberate comedian and satirist, is perhaps less rich and versatile. He was a clergyman of the outspoken and not always decorous type, of which Swift is a later representative, and allows himself more licence than Lydgate both in thought and expression, being one of the first to adopt the so-called "macaronic" style, of larding his verse with scraps of French and Latin; but his undoubted gift of allegorical description marks him out as one of the links between Langley and Spenser, as his play of *Nigramansir* marks him out as one of the playwrights who preceded Shakspere.

Scottish Poets.—These as a body are less able, less learned, and less cosmopolitan; but in each of them there is an occasional vein, it may be drastic or sweet, or solemn or descriptive, which is not quite to be found in the English. And whatever their inferiority, they were fully sensible of it, and held the work of their seniors in great respect.

Barbour (1316—1395), Archdeacon of Aberdeen, is known by his epic, *The Bruce*, a poem nearly equal in length to "Paradise Lost," and which deals with events recent enough to make it vivid in personal detail. The description of the meeting with De Boune shows his drastic touch.

Sprent they samen intill a lyng;
Sir Henry missed the noble king;
And he that in his stirrups stude,
With the ax, that was hard and gude,
With sae great main, raucht him a dint,
That nouther hat nor helm micht stint
The heavy dush, that he him gave,
That near the head till the harns clave.
The hand-ax shaft frushit in tway;
And he down to the yird gan gae
All flatlings, for him failit micht.
This was the first straik of the ficht.

James I. (1394—1437) and **Henryson** (*d.* 1490) had more imagination and refinement. The *King's Quhair*, *i.e.*, quire or book, which tells of James's falling in love with the Lady Joan Beaufort at Windsor, while a prisoner in the hands of Henry IV., has a force derived from what theologians call the argument from experience. There is no mistaking its truth and lyrical feeling.

Or are ye god Cupidis owin princess?
And cumyn are to loose me out of band,
Or are ye very Nature the goddess,
That have depainted with your heavenly hand
This garden full of flouris, as they stand?
What shall I think, alas! what reverence
Shall I mester to your excellence?

Of her array the form gif I shall write,
Toward her golden hair and rich attire,
In fretwise couchit with perlis white,
And great balas lemyng as the fire,
With many an emerant and fair sapphire,
And on her head a chaplet, fresh of hue,
Of plumys parted red, and white, and blue.

Full of quaking spanglis bright as gold,
Forged of shape like to the amorettys,
So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold,
The plumys eke like to the flower jonettys,
And other of shape like to the flower jonettys;
And, above all this, there was, well I wot,
Beauty enough to make a world to doat.

Henryson was a schoolmaster and notary public in Dunfermline. His finest poems are the *Testament of Cresseid*, and his *Fables*—stories from Aesop with modern applications. An outcast from the Greek camp at Troy, Cressida makes her way to the temple of Venus, where Saturn appears to her in a vision, a sheaf of arrows in his girdle, "feathered with ice and headed with hail-stanes," and pronounces upon her sentence of leprosy.

"Thy great fairness and all thy beauty gay;
Thy wanton blood, and eke thy golden hair,
Here I exclude frae thee for evermair:

I change thy mirth into melancholy,
Which is the mother of all pensiveness,
Thy moisture and thy heat to cold and dry,
Thine insolence, thy play and wantonness,
To great disease; thy pomp and thy riches
In mortal need; and great penurity
Thou suffer shall, and as a beggar die."

She wakes a leper, and makes her "Complaint."

"O sop of sorrow soaken into care!
O caitive Cresseid now and evermare!
Gone is thy joy and all thy mirth in erd;
Of all blithness now art thou blacknit bare;
There is nae salve that helpen may thy sare;
Fell is thy fortune, wicked is thy weird,
Thy bliss is banished, and thy bail on breird;
Under the earth, God gif I graven were,
Where men of Greece nor yet of Troy might hear!

"Where is thy chamber wantonly beseen,
With burly bed and bankouris browdered been,
Spices and wine to thy collation,
The cuppis all of gold and silver shene,
Thy sweet meatis served in plaitis clean,
With saffron sauce of a good season,
Thy gay garments with many goodly gown,
Thy pleasant lawn pinnèd with golden pin?
All is areir, thy great royal renown. . . ."

When this was said, with paper she sat down,
And in this manner made her Testament:
"Here I beteiche my corpse and carrion,
With wormis and with toadis to be rent;
My cup, my clapper, and mine ornament,
And all my gold, the leper folk shall have,
When I am dead to bury me in grave.

"This royal ring, set with this ruby red,
Which Troilus in dowry to me send,
To him again I leave when I am dead,
To make my careful death unto him kend:
Thus I conclude shortly and make an end;
My spreit I leave to Diane, where she dwells,
To walk with her in waste woodis and wells."

No more delicate poet than Henryson ever graced the early literature of a country. His verse has all the seemliness of Chaucer, with a sweetness of its own, and among the Scottish poets he is unique for quaint and quiet humour.

The rural Mouse into the winter tide
Had hunger, cauld, and tholit great distress;
The tother Mouse that in the burgh can bide,
Was gild-brother, and made ane free burgess.
Toll-free also, but custom, mair or less,
And freedom had to gae where ere she list
Among the cheese and meal, in ark and kist.*

Dunbar (1450—1520) is less subtle, with more force and versatility. He was a poet of great reputation in his time and a favourite at the Court of James IV.; but in spite of this we know little more of his life than that he studied at St. Andrews, became a Friar of Orders Grey, in which capacity he preached his way from Berwick to Canterbury, and was finally attached to the Scottish Court, from which he had a small pension, presumably on account of his services as clerk to various foreign embassies. Thus, like Chaucer and Lydgate, he had travelled and was a man of the world. Indeed, with all the English poets he had some point of affinity; could be didactic, not to say censorious, with Gower and Occleve, lyrical with Lydgate, and scurrilous with Skelton. With Chaucer

* From *The Twa Mice.*

his chief points of resemblance are his realism, as shown in his poem on the negro woman, who had recently caused a sensation in the country:

> When she is clad in rich apparel,
> She blinks as bricht as a tar-barrell;
> When she was born the sun tholit eclipse.
> The nicht wad fain fecht in her quarrel
> The lady wi' the meikle lips!

and his ideality, as shown in his allegories, *The Golden Targe* and *The Thistle and the Rose.* The object of the first poem is to show the insufficiency of Reason as a "targe" or shield against Love; the second celebrates the King's marriage with the Princess Margaret of England, and ends with the anthem of Birds:

> Then all the birdis sang with voice on height,
> Whose mirthful sound was marvellous to hear;
> The mavis sang, "Hail, ROSE, most rich and right,
> That does up flourish under Phoebus' sphere;
> Hail, plant of youth; hail, Princess, daughter dear;
> Hail, blossom breaking out of the blood royal,
> Whose precious virtue is imperial."
>
> The merle she sang, "Hail, ROSE of most delight,
> Hail, of all flowers queen and sovereign":
> The lark she sang, "Hail, ROSE, both red and white,
> Most pleasant flower, of mighty colours twane":
> The nightingale sang, "Hail, Nature's suffragane,
> In beauty, nurture, and every nobleness,
> In rich array, renown, and gentleness."
>
> The common voice up raise of birdis small,
> Upon this wise, "Oh, blessèd be the hour
> That thou was chosen to be our principal;
> Welcome to be our Princess of honour,
> Our pearl, our pleasance, and our paramour,
> Our peace, our play, our plain felicity;
> Christ thee conserve from all adversity."

Upon the same occasion Dunbar wrote a fine lyric of welcome beginning

O Fayre, fayrest of every fayre,

and resembling Tennyson's Ode to the Princess Alexandra. He has neither the tenderness of Chaucer nor that sanity which underlies Chaucer's masculine sense; so that his genius is less symmetrical. But his earnestness and his humour he carries almost to a point beyond Chaucer, the first in the direction of solemnity, as in the poem *Timor mortis conturbat me*—

Unto the dead goes all estates,
Princes, Prelates, and Potestates,
Baith rich and poor of all degree:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

He takes the knights into the field,
Anarmèd under helm and shield;
Victor he is at all melee:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

That strong unmerciful tyrand
Takes, on the mother's breast suckand,
The babe, full of benignity:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

He takes the champion in the stour,
The captain closèd in the tower,
The lady in bower full of beauty:
Timor mortis conturbat me;—

the other in the wild satanic vein of the *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins.* This combination is peculiarly Scottish: it resembles the wailing dirge mingled with the wild orgies of a Highland funeral, and is as puzzling to a southerner as that other specimen of Scotch humour, the Scolding Match, or *Flytin' of Dunbar and Kennedy*, where Dunbar does no more than hold his own, and in which the most gratuitous

and scurrilous personalities are exchanged; the truth being that the animus is purely platonic, and the contest a piece of pleasantry on both sides, with no more malice than that of two schoolboys snowballing each other, or two kittens of the same breed at play.

For descriptive power of the realistic order, the kind re-introduced by Thomson and Wordsworth, no poetry of the period can compare with the *Prologues* written by **Douglas** (1474—1522), afterwards Bishop of Dunkeld, to his translation of the Aeneid. No more sustained piece of landscape painting than his May morning, abounding in touches of minute observation, is to be found even in Thomson:

As fresche Aurore, to mychty Tithone spous,
Ischit of her saffron bed, and euyr hous,
In crammesy clad and granite violate,
With sanguyne cape, the selvage purpurate;
Unschet the wyndois of hir large hall,
Spred all with rosis, and full of balme royall. . . .
For to behald, it was ane glore to se
The stabillyt wyndis, and the calmyt se;
The soft sessoun, the firmament serene;
The loune illuminate are, and firth amene:
The silver scalit fyschis on the grete,
Ouer thowrt clere stremes sprinkilland for the hete,
With fynnys schin and broune as synopare,
And chesal talis, stour and here and there:
The new cullour, alichting all the landis,
Forgane the stanryis schene, and beriall strandis:
Quhil the reflex of the diurnal bemes
The bene bonkis kest ful of variant glemes.

i.e. As fresh Aurora, great Tithonus' spouse,
Quitted her saffron bed and ivory house,
In crimson clad and robe of violet,
With scarlet cape, the border purple-set;
Opened the windows of her ample hall,
With roses spread, and full of nard withal. . . .

For to behold, it glorious was to see
The winds appeasèd and the tranquil sea,
The season bland, the firmament serene,
The still, illumined air and smiling frith ;
The silver-scalèd fishes on the gravel,
Across the clear streams glancing in the heat,
With shining *fins, as brown as cinnabar,*
And chisel-tails, were darting here and there, etc.

Douglas's *Palace of Honour* and *King Hart*—the Heart surrounded by the Senses and defended by Age and Experience against the attacks of Dame Pleasaunce—are obviously allegorical poems.

Those of **Lindsay** (1490—1555), *The Dreme* and *The Complaynt to the King*, are meditative. They are a running commentary on the disorganised state of the country, and in the spirit of Scotch protestantism are directed more to the absurdity of the prevailing abuses than to their wickedness. In consigning to perdition the nobles who had taken a mere boy from school and set him to govern a kingdom, Lindsay declares,

I wyll nocht say that it was treassoun,
But I dare sweir, it was no reassoun.

And in identically the same terms his irritated common-sense moves him afterwards to address the King on the fashion of wearing long trains on the street, which caused Mr. Ruskin to express his doubt of the delicacy or even decency of English ladies. In his *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, acted before the Court, and attacking the clergy, the nobility, and the merchants, he has pre-figured the modern socialist movement, of which Mr. Ruskin is only in part an adherent, against the Church, the aristocracy, and the capitalists. Thus his field as a reformer is wider than that of Knox; but he is chiefly noticeable as connecting Scotch poetry with the Scottish

Reformation, in the same way that he connects Scotch satire with the English of Skelton.

2. Prose.

It is only towards the close of this period that its Prose comes to have much connection with its Poetry, either in form or spirit. **Sir John Mandeville** (1300—1371) writes of his travels in a simple, natural manner, but is chiefly interesting as having been the first Englishman to give a connected account of travel at all. He had been in the East, and his book was written ostensibly to induce Christian England to re-conquer Palestine; but he had visited other countries besides, and he takes upon himself to describe even more than he had visited. Sir John seems to have gone forth with a truly British determination, if not to see as much for his money as he could get, on coming home not to tell more lies than he could help. Possibly he thought the Pope's licence of the book warranted its veracity as well as its orthodoxy. But his description of the Perilous Valley throws the remainder of his account of China and the far East into discredit.

> There is a vale between the mountains which extends nearly four miles; and some call it the Enchanted Vale, some call it the Vale of Devils, and some the Perilous Vale. In that vale men hear oftentimes great tempests and thunders, and great murmurs and noises, day and night; and great noise, as it were, of tabors, and nakeres, and trumpets, as though it were of a great feast. This vale is all full of devils, and has been always; and men say there that it is one of the entrances of hell. In that vale is great plenty of gold and silver; wherefore many misbelieving men, and many Christians also, oftentimes go in, to have of the treasure; but few return, especially of the misbelieving men, for they are anon strangled by the devils.

Also part of his narrative is evidently borrowed from the work of a Lombard Friar whom he mentions, though

not by name, as having met in the course of his travels. But considering the aim of the book, its account of foreign religions is free from bigotry; though compared with Herodotus, who lived two thousand years earlier, Mandeville is a much less thoughtful, observant, and trustworthy guide.

The results of the foreign experience of **Sir John Fortescue** (1395—1485) appear in a more concentrated if less catholic form. He had been Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI.; and while in exile in Lorraine made the observations on the state of French customs and politics which afterwards served as the basis of his *Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy*: the comparison being in favour of constitutional England, and all forms of poverty, oppression, and mismanagement in France being ascribed to the despotic type of government. Fortescue writes with Devonshire intensity, in the spirit of those who to-day would ascribe any similar presumed inferiority of Frenchmen to French republicanism; and exhibits the usual defects of a lawyer suing for a conviction, adducing irrelevant consequences, ignoring the evidence *per contra*, and making the most of small points.

> It is cowardice and lack of hearts and courage that keepeth the Frenchmen from rising, and not poverty; which courage no Frenchman hath like to the Englishman. It hath been often seen in England that three or four thieves, for poverty, hath set upon seven or eight true men, and robbed them all. But it hath not been seen in France that seven or eight thieves have been hardy to rob three or four true men. Wherefore it is right seld that Frenchmen be hanged for robbery, for that they have no hearts to do so terrible an act. There be therefore mo men hanged in England, in a year, for robbery and manslaughter, than there be hanged in France for such cause of crime in seven years.

But his work is an excellent specimen of argumentative prose, and connects him with Bacon in the succeeding

age, as his outlines of English Law (written in Latin) connect him with Bracton in the preceding.

Equally interesting as a piece of argumentative prose is *The Repressor of overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, by Bishop **Pecock** (1390—1460), whose position is singularly analogous to that of Hooker in the next period. Pecock defended the practices of the Romish Church, such as pilgrimages, the hierarchy, and the use of images, on the ground that these, though of secondary importance, were reasonable deductions from the teaching of Scripture, as against the Lollards, the Evangelicals of that day, on the one hand, who maintained them to be unreasonable, but to the scandal of the High Church party on the other, with whom they were matters of faith and primary importance. As the Lollards had only argument to oppose to him, while the Church had legal jurisdiction, the affair ended by his books being burnt and himself put in confinement.

In 1474, less than twenty years after, appeared the firstfruits of a new enterprise which was destined to make the burning of books a more precarious method of stopping their circulation than ever. This was **Caxton's** *Game and Play of Chesse*, printed by him in the Almonry of Westminster, and followed by translations and replicas of standard works. As an author, Caxton's claims are slight and unpretentious. As a translator, he lays himself somewhat open to the sneer of his rival Douglas, who says that his "Aeneid" is no more like Virgil than the devil is like St. Augustine. But as a publisher, he does not merit the sneer of Gibbon, that he complied with the "vicious tastes of his readers," and "amused popular credulity with romances of fabulous knights and saints." Caxton undoubtedly selected the literature that was most to his own fancy,—as in the legends of his favourite heroes,

Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bologna,—but seeing that the romances in question have given pleasure to readers more cultured and suggestion to authors more original than Gibbon, we cannot deny the merit of judicious selection to a man who was bound to take every advantage of popular taste for the introduction of an improved system of publication, and whose transcendent merit was that he published at all.

If proof were wanted of Caxton's position as a most enlightened patron of literature, it would be found in his reproduction of **Malory's** noble work, the *Mort d'Arthur*. This was founded mainly on the French romances relating to Merlin and Launcelot of the Lake; but in the hands of Malory (of whose personality we know almost as little as we do of Homer) it became the Iliad of our prose literature—a finished epic in which the scattered legends took form and coherence, and, what was better, new life and colour. There is also a little of Homer's set phrase: knights when they leap to the ground always "avoid" their horses, the strokes they deal are "sad"; and there is a keen touch of Homeric feeling in the expression when Elaine is first brought to Queen Guenever, "either made other cheer by countenance, but nothing with hearts." Of single combat in the Homeric style there is enough and to spare; but this is so skilfully managed, that even when the blood of the wounded knight is flowing over horse and armour, we feel it no more than the impression of a dream—as the art of cookery is to make one forget the shambles as well as to please the palate. And over all this rash and rapid action, locked here and there into recesses of pure courtly sunshine or devout retreat, rises, like a *vox celeste*, a spirit of resignation and self-denial, that echoes, as in cathedral aisles, among the vaultings of the roof and the monuments of the dead.

Wherever that antagonist to social man and mortal foe to courtesy—the Ill-conditioned—is to be met, there the knight is ready to yield apology for mistake and penance for crime; and though Malory, like Tennyson, knows instinctively that degradation of energy plays too strong a part in the world of spirit to be disguised even by romance, or arrested by poetic justice, he has the tact not to linger too ostentatiously on what is good in his knightly figures, and to throw round the evil the veil of that charity which he would fain have always discovered in themselves. This degradation, typified in the sin of Guenever and the collapse of the Round Table, is the theme presented by Tennyson in scarcely more dignified and sometimes less dramatic form; nor has Tennyson himself, in the parting of Arthur and Guenever, expressed more stately pathos than Malory in the parting of Guenever and Launcelot.

When Sir Launcelot was brought to her, then she said to all the ladies, Through this man and me hath all this war been wrought, and the death of the most noblest knights of the world; for through our love that we have loved together is my most noble lord slain. . . . Therefore, Sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, that thou never see me more in the visage; and I command thee on God's behalf, that thou forsake my company, and to thy kingdom thou turn again and keep well thy realm from war and wrack. For as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee; for through thee and me is the flower of kings and knights destroyed. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, go to thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her with joy and bliss, and I pray thee heartily pray for me to our Lord, that I may amend my mis-living. Now, sweet madam, said Sir Launcelot, would ye that I should return again unto my country, and there to wed a lady? Nay, madam, wit you well that shall I never do: for I shall never be so false to you of that I have promised, but the same destiny that ye have taken you to, I will take me unto, for to please Jesu, and ever for you I cast me specially to pray. . . . And therefore, lady, sithen ye have taken you to perfection, I must needs take me to perfection of right. For I take record

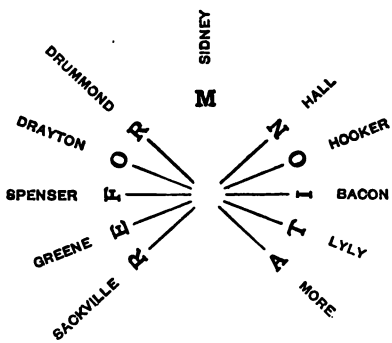
of God, in you I have had mine earthly joy. And if I had found you now so disposed, I had cast me to have had you into mine own realm.

But sithen I find you thus disposed, I insure you faithfully I will ever take me to penance, and pray while my life lasteth, if that I may find any hermit either grey or white that will receive me. Wherefore, madam, I pray you kiss me, and never no more. Nay, said the queen, that shall I never do, but abstain you from such works. And they departed.

This work of Malory, more than any other of the age, is connected with the Pastoral of Spenser and Sidney in the next.

III.

THE REFORMATION (1500—1600).



THE literature of this Age, that of the Reformation, is the fruit of the Renaissance, and, like it, includes various forms of artistic activity, with a scientific superadded. With the Protestant Reformation it is connected as a separate effect of the same cause. With Italy it has even a more special analogy than the age of Chaucer, in the experimental physics of Gilbert, which connect it with Galileo; the Pastoral and Drama under Spenser and Shakspere, which connect it with the romantic school of landscape and figure painters in Venice under Tintoret and Titian; while Sidney connects it with the older Italian stanza-writers and sonneteers.

1. Poetry.

To the school of stanza-poets belong the earlier names of **Sir Thomas Wyatt, Lord Surrey,** and **Sackville** (1527

—1608) Lord Buckhurst. For in this aristocratic age the literature, which in the previous period had risen from the monk and the minstrel to the squire and the knight, had risen to the order of the knight and the noble—an order which in Shakspere's patrons, Lords Pembroke and Southampton, degenerated into the connoisseur and disappeared. Of these accomplished and sprightly gentlemen the model was Petrarch, as Chaucer's had been Boccaccio. Wyatt and Surrey had both travelled; and the latter, who perished as one of the victims of the caprice of Henry VIII., was considered the most perfect gentleman of his time, a predecessor to Sidney. Wyatt excels in wit:

Blame not my Lute! for he must sound
Of this or that as liketh me;
For lack of wit the Lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch my change,
Blame not my Lute!

My Lute, alas! doth not offend,
Though that perforce he must agree
To sound such tunes as I intend
To sing to them that heareth me;
Then though my songs be somewhat plain,
And toucheth some that use to feign,
Blame not my Lute!

Surrey excels in poetic feeling:

So cruel prison how could betide, alas!
As proud Windsor? where I, in lust and joy,
With a king's son, my childish years did pass,
In greater feast than Priam's son of Troy:

Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour!
The large green courts where we were wont to hove,
With eyes cast up into the Maiden Tower,
And easy sighs such as folk draw in love.

The wide vales, eke, that harboured us each night,
Wherewith, alas, reviveth in my breast
The sweet accord such sleeps as yet delight,
The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest:

The secret thoughts imparted with such trust,
The wanton talk, the divers change of play,
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just;
Wherewith we passed the winter nights away.

But what distinguishes Surrey from Wyatt, and among English poets generally, is his having been the first to introduce Blank Verse into the literature. This occurs in his translation of the first two books of the Aeneid, the work that Douglas had translated into the heroic couplet. It is his chief point in common with Sackville, who was the first to introduce it into Drama, but who, independently of that, is a metrical and allegorical writer of a high order. It was Sackville's distinction that, having written little, he excelled in such diverse styles as allegory and drama, and brought them to a certain degree of perfection, both in matter and manner. He is essentially a masculine and symmetrical writer; that he is also a forcible and a finished, this extract will show. It is from the *Mirror for Magistrates, i.e.*, persons in authority, which, like Lydgate's "Fall of Princes," was to present the career of such rulers as had fallen from their high estate; Sackville's contribution being the "Induction" and "Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham."

And next in order sad, Old Age we found:
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind;
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him assigned
To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined
His vital thread, and ended with their knife
The fleeting course of fast declining life;

Crook-backed he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed;
Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;
With old lame bones, that rattled by his side;
His scalp all pilled, and he with eld forelore,
His withered fist still knocking at Death's door;
Fumbling, and drivelling, as he draws his breath;
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

But, oh, the doleful sight that then we see!
We turned our look, and on the other side
A grisly shape of Famine mought we see:
With greedy looks, and gaping mouth, that cried
And roared for meat, as she should there have died;
Her body thin and bare as any bone,
Whereto was left nought but the case alone.

And that, alas! was gnawen every where,
All full of holes; that I ne mought refrain
From tears, to see how she her arms could tear,
And with her teeth gnash on the bones in vain,
When, all for nought, she fain would so sustain
Her starven corpse, that rather seemed a shade
Than any substance of a creature made.

Pastoral and allegory have always been closely associated, and one who can write descriptive allegory of this sort might easily be expected to write descriptive pastoral. But Sackville, whatever he may have been *de jure*, was not *de facto* a pastoral poet; and how much in harmony and in earnest the age was upon that point is seen from the great variety of its PASTORAL POESY.

(1) We have the Bucolic Pastoral of **Tusser**, a practical farmer in the eastern counties, though not a successful one, and a witty and didactic writer with his *Hondreth Good Points of Husbandrie*, the first of English Georgics.

The sun in the south, or else southly and west,
Is joy to the hop, as a welcomed guest;
But wind in the north, or else northerly east,
To the hop is as ill as a fay in a feast.

Meet plot for a hop-yard once found as is told,
Make thereof account, as of jewel of gold;
Now dig it, and leave it, the sun for to burn,
And afterwards fence it, to serve for that turn.

The hop for his profit I thus do exalt,
It strengtheneth drink, and it favoureth malt;
And being well brewed, long kept it will last,
And drawing abide—if ye draw not too fast.

(2) We have the Typical Pastoral of **Lodge** and **Greene** (1560—1592), in which the swain is a veritable shepherd, engaged in celebrating the superiority of a country life to a town life in general, with his rueful experience of the latter in particular, or the pursuit of his (for the time being) particular shepherdess, whether successful or the reverse. The noblest of Greene's lyrics is entitled *The Praise of Fawnia*, but, like Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love," or Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes," is as recognisable from its opening line as "Vedrai carino" or "Spirto gentil."

Ah were she pitiful as she is fair,
  Or but as mild as she is seeming so,
Then were my hopes greater than my despair,
  Then all the world were heaven, nothing woe. . . .
So as she shows, she seems the budding rose,
  Yet sweeter far than is an earthly flower,
Sovereign of beauty, like the spray she grows,
  Compassed she is with thorns and cankered flower;
Yet were she willing to be plucked and worn,
She would be gathered, though she grew on thorn. . . .

Ah when she riseth from her blissful bed
  She comforts all the world, as doth the sun,
And at her sight the night's foul vapour's fled.
  When she is set, the gladsome day is done.
O glorious sun, imagine me the west,
Shine in my arms, and set thou in my breast.

Greene is less distinguished as poet than dramatist; and though the pastoral vein in him is more pure and primitive than in his fellow-dramatists, it is one which runs more or less through them all from Peele to Jonson.

For (3) we have the Mythical Pastoral of **Marlowe** and **Chapman's** *Hero and Leander*, of **Shakspere's** *Venus and Adonis*. The first is a paraphrase from the Greek of Musaeus, but a paraphrase in which the transformation scene in a theatre is a paraphrase; it has the same relation to the Greek story that Shakspere's "Lucrece" has to the Roman. The interest of the poem is dramatic rather than pastoral or descriptive, but for touches of dramatic description like this, from Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's version, it is unsurpassed.

> Now Hero finds,
> By that she felt, her dear Leander's state:
> She wept and prayed for him to every Fate;
> And every wind that whipped her with her hair
> About the face, she kissed and spake it fair,
> Kneeled to it, gave it drink out of her eyes
> To quench his thirst.

For suggestive beauty some of the descriptive passages surpass everything in Greek art except its sculpture:

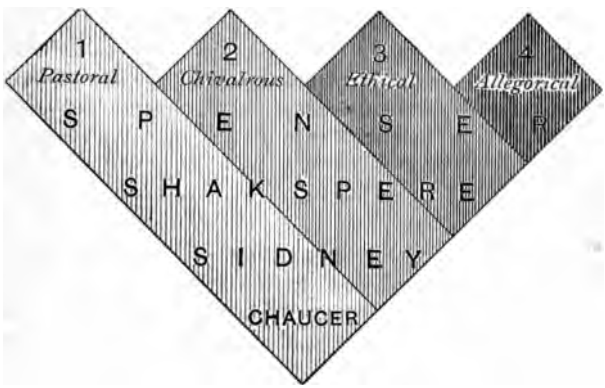
> His body was as straight as Circe's wand;
> Jove might have sipt out nectar from his hand.
> Even as delicious meat is to the taste
> So was his neck in touching, and surpast
> The white of Pelops' shoulder.

Shakspere's "Venus and Adonis" is the greatest of dramatic idylls, but it is no more than an idyll, and does not belong to the 4th class of pastoral poems, viz., the Dramatic Pastoral of **Jonson's** *Sad Shepherd* and **Fletcher's** *Faithful Shepherdess.*

(5) In the *Faerie Queene* we reach the highest species in this form of composition, the Allegorical Pastoral. Its author, **Edmund Spenser** (1552—1599), was born and educated in London. At seventeen he went to Cambridge, where he remained seven years. While in the north of England he wrote his *Shepheards Calender*, a pastoral poem on the months, ostensibly of the "typical" order, but with allegorical allusions both personal and political. It was published in 1579 and decided his career in life. Sidney, to whom it was dedicated, as "the noble and virtuous Gentleman, most worthy of all titles both of learning and chevalrie," introduced the author at court. The next year he went to Ireland as Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and eventually settled at Kilcolman Castle, in Cork. It was in Ireland, and amid precisely the same scenery and disorganised social conditions the poem describes, that he composed the *Faerie Queene*, one of the few masterpieces in any literature as to whose merits all readers and critics are agreed—a star the estimate of whose true magnitude and position has suffered nothing from errors of observation or the parallax of time—and as the work is so entirely a *prerogative* work of the literature, its status may fitly be indicated by comparison with the masterpieces of the greatest of the author's predecessors or contemporaries, Chaucer, Sidney, and Shakspere. The separate columns in the annexed diagram indicate the departments in which each author is represented, and show how in turn he is overlapped by and included in the one above.

Primarily the Faerie Queene is a pastoral poem, but it is so only in association; for it has more than association, it has a temper, a tendency, and a treatment—a temper which is chivalrous, a tendency that is ethical, a treatment that is allegorical. If, then, we take these

in order, two by two, we may say of it (1) that it is a Pastoral poem raised to the rank of a Chivalrous. Here we may at once compare it with the naturalism of the Canterbury Tales. Like Chaucer, Spenser has his nucleus of plot—the Twelve-Day Feast of the Fairy Queen, each day with its heroic adventure; but it is remarkable how the scenery, which with Chaucer forms the foreground of village life, has become the background of romantic achievement, and the personages of



civic life are transformed into figures of chivalry—the nun into the lady, the bailiff into the man-at-arms, the priest and the clerk into the knight and the squire. Instead of the ploughman following his team along the furrow, we have the measured pace of the mounted knight down the interminable forest glade; and where the crow flew or the heifer strayed, we have only the circling of the eagle or the wakeful sleep of the beast of prey. For the most remarkable of all is that, with this advance in courtly manners and appurtenance, the rest of the environment is in great measure a *reversion* to

a more primitive state, by so much as the forest is more primitive than the orchard, the stream than the mill-race, the fen than the field. So that with Spenser we are introduced to a life which is at once more refined and more rustic, more elaborate and more simple, than Chaucer's; which may be barbarous, or may be fastidious, but is never familiar. It was partly the contrast of all this—the knight's gay caparisons and glittering armour relieved against sombre forests and gloomy meres—that made chivalry attractive to a poet; but also the sense of Law, dominating this savagery and turbulence, and blending with the sense of fealty to Womanhood as the inspirer of knightly deed. With Spenser Woman is regarded not simply in her passive capacity, as an object of succour, but in her active, as a power to dispense healing and spiritual influence; neither, therefore, as man's plaything nor his imperious master, encroachingly masculine in one section of it, with the certainty of driving another to become more and more meretricious in its efforts to captivate, and more and more servile in its readiness to please. And when, in his fifth Sonnet, we find him defending the reserve of his mistress—

> Rudely thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,
> In finding fault with her too portly pride. . . .
> Such pride is praise, such portliness is honour—

we feel that in expressing his own preference, viz., for such a woman as he cannot love unless he can reverence, and cannot reverence unless she has a high degree of self-respect, he has furnished the interpretation to his didactic conception of woman generally, as one whose supreme charm, like that of nature, is mystery, and whose surest passport to the reverence of others is reverence for herself.

(2) The Faerie Queene is a Chivalrous poem raised to the rank of an Ethical. It is so designedly, the twelve books (of which only six were finished) being intended to represent the twelve cardinal virtues of Aristotle; and in this respect Spenser may be contrasted with Sidney, whose poetry has no distinct ethical tendency.

(3) It is an Ethical poem raised to the rank of a Symbolical; in which respect it has the advantage over Shakspere, who, whatever he may have been *de jure*, was not *de facto* an allegorical poet. Nor is it simply as an allegorical writer, like Sackville, that Spenser transcends Shakspere, but by the unique faculty of symbolic design, by which he transcends, not only Sackville, but all the masters of the art in painting as well as literature from Angelico and Botticelli to Hunt and Rossetti. How rare that art is may be seen from the difficulty in deciphering it; and the student may test his sensibility on the point by trying to interpret the lines italicised in the description of Hope. Even Mr. Ruskin, skilled as he is in interpreting the Greek Myths, is sometimes at a nonplus with respect to the Italian painters; and it is with these that Spenser, who has been called the "poet's poet," but who might rather be called the painter's poet, is to be compared. His superiority is chiefly seen in the Mask of Cupid (Book III.), and depends (1) on the extreme subtlety of the symbolism, and (2) on the multiplicity of symbols employed to typify a given quality. His description of Fear will illustrate these points, the lines italicised the first in particular.

> With him went Hope in rank, a handsome Maid,
> Of cheerful look and lovely to behold:
> In silken samite she was light arrayed,
> And her fair locks were woven up in gold:
> She always smiled, and in her hand did hold

An holy-water-sprinkle, dipt in dew,
With which she sprinkled favours manifold
On whom she list and did great liking show,
Great liking unto many, but true love to few.

Next him was Fear, *all armed from top to toe,*
Yet thought himself not safe enough thereby,
But feared each shadow moving to or fro;
And his own arms when glittering he did spy
Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,
As ashes pale of hue, and wingèd heeled,
And evermore on Danger fixed his eye,
'Gainst whom he always bent *a brazen shield,*
Which his right hand unarmèd fearfully did wield.

Nothing could better express nervous fright and hopeless defence than this wearing the shield on the wrong arm.

The Spenserian stanza differs, as will be observed, from Chaucer's, which it has superseded, by having a "*c*" and "*b*" rhyme between the double "*b*" and double "*c*," with an extra foot in the last line. In the *Sonnet*, not the strict Italian form, beginning *a b b a, a b b a*, but a looser form of his own, beginning *a b a b, b c b c*, he had great success; and not less in the irregular metre of his magnificent wedding march, the *Epithalamion*:

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She cometh in, before the Almighty's view:
Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces:

Bring her up to the high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endless matrimony make;
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echo ring.

Daniel in Somerset, and **Drayton** (1563—1631) in Warwickshire, unite excellence in the stanza and the sonnet with skill as Narrative poets, the first in his History of the *Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*, the second in his History of the *Barons' Wars*. And to this Drayton added his unique poem, *The Polyolbion*, a descriptive account of England, written in a style that makes it interesting to the casual reader, while abounding in such information personal and topographical as makes it valuable to the antiquarian. In force, fancy, and versatility he is superior to Daniel; and if traces of imitation are to be detected in his verse, it is quite possible in turn that his *Cynthia's Quest* may have influenced the "Talking Oak" of Tennyson:

The wealthy spring yet never bore
That sweet nor dainty flower,
That damasked not the chequered floor
Of Cynthia's summer bower.

The birch, the myrtle, and the bay,
Like friends did all embrace;
And their large branches did display
To canopy the place.

Where she like Venus doth appear
Upon a rosy bed,
As lilies the soft pillows were
Whereon she laid her head.

Heaven on her shape such cost bestowed,
And with such bounties blest,
No limb of hers but might have made
A goddess at the least.

His Sonnets exhibit the singular family resemblance of the Elizabethan poets, the introspection, the dialectic play of wit, the persistent analogy, the fine vein of hyperbole:

Taking my pen, with words to cast my woe,
Duly to count the sum of all my cares,
I find my griefs innumerable grow,
The reckonings rise to millions of despairs;
And thus, dividing of my fatal hours,
The payments of my love I read and cross,
Subtracting, set my sweets unto my sours,
My joy's arrearage leads me to my loss:
And thus, mine eyes a debtor to thine eye,
Which by extortion gaineth all their looks,
My heart hath paid such grievous usury,
That all their wealth lies in thy beauty's books;
And all is thine which hath been due to me,
And I a bankrupt quite undone by thee.

Another of these poets, whose greatness might have been more recognised, but whose power might have been less, had he not profited by the traditions of his school, is **Drummond** of Hawthornden (1585—1649), the friend of Drayton and Ben Jonson. His *Forth Feasting*, a welcome to King James on re-visiting Scotland, and his Sonnets, show the luxury and harmony of his English rivals (from whom he occasionally borrows verbatim), but have not their subtlety. His vein is not dramatic: he belongs essentially to the school of Sidney and Spenser in its decline, and stands accordingly in the same relation to it that Fletcher or Massinger bears to Shakspere.

2. Prose-Poetry.

In addition to his multifarious functions in literature, **Sir Philip Sidney** (1554—1586) presents those of a figure of chivalry and a man of action. It was his misfortune that, dying at the age of thirty-two, before he had decided whether to devote his life to arms or letters, he lost hold of literature at its most critical epoch both as an art and a profession, and at the very instant when it was about to be shown what it could become in the drama of Shakspere. With this misfortune was mingled a personal one. For to Sidney, who stood central to so many interests of the age, who was diplomatist, soldier, and courtier, a scholar of Venice and Padua, an artist and patron of the arts, whose portrait was painted by the immortal Veronese, there would have been added the distinction of a friendship with the strongest and sweetest spirit of the time, and a mind more central than his own.

(1) It is in his *Sonnets* that he most resembles Shakspere; and if from any form of literature Shakspere's mind received its temper and influence, it must have been from such a sonnet as this, which in subtlety and daring equals any of his own.

What may words say, or what may words not say,
  When Truth itself must speak like Flattery?
Within what bounds can one his liking stay,
  When Nature doth with Infinite agree?
What Nestor's counsel can my flames allay,
  Since Reason's self doth blow the coal in me?
And ah, what hope that Hope should once see day,
  Where Cupid is sworn page to Chastity?
Honour is honoured that thou dost possess
  Him as thy slave, and even long-needy Fame
  Doth now grow Rich, meaning my Stella's name.
Wit learns in thee perfection to express.
  Not thou by praise, but praise in thee is raised.
  It is a praise to praise, when thou art praised.

The intellectual character of these Sonnets to Lady Rich, and his Pastorals, has caused many to find them defective in that warmth of heart and imagination which they discover in his prose; but it would be hard to find a more impassioned expression of admiration than this. For the same reason many have fancied that these poems are a mere rhetorical exercise after the manner of the times, and that the passion expressed had no real root; while, on the other hand, there are those who maintain that the affection was only too real, and went beyond what the verse pretends. The fact lies between the two, the probability being that his poetry expresses the truth, and no more than the truth, respecting the connection. His devotion to Lady Rich was a peculiar one, and had a conscious history. Her father, the Earl of Essex, had designed her for Sidney, but the lady being young, the gentleman did not seem inclined to fulfil his part of the agreement, and it was only after her betrothal that he seems to have discovered her attraction. Hence the romance of the situation, which never seems to have degenerated into familiarity, and causes the Sonnets to belong to that class of self-communing poetry, in which the object of affection is spiritualised by the reverence of the writer, as in the sonnets of Shakspere and Rossetti.

(2) In the union of poetic faculty with the prose rhetoric of his romance *Arcadia*, he resembles the next most striking figure of that chivalrous age, **Sir Walter Raleigh** (1552—1618). Raleigh's poetry shows wit and feeling; his *History of the World* a command of clear and vigorous prose, though it has less distinction of style than his Essays. This is part of his Advice to his Son:

Amongst all other things of the world, take care of thy estate, which thou shalt ever preserve if thou observe three things: first,

that thou know what thou hast, what everything is worth that thou hast, and to see that thou art not wasted by thy servants and officers. The second is, that thou never spend anything before thou have it; for borrowing is the canker and death of every man's estate. The third is, that thou suffer not thyself to be wounded for other men's faults, and scourged for other men's offences; which is, the surety for another, for thereby millions of men have been beggared and destroyed, paying the reckoning of other men's riot, and the charge of other men's folly and prodigality; if thou smart, smart for thine own sins.

Sidney's prose is more elaborate and luxuriant, and though abounding in happy imagery and expressions (such as those italicised in the extract), it is often somewhat laboured and turgid.

Now, therein, of all sciences—I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit—is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only shew the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first, give you a cluster of grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions; which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, *with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner*; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste; which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarbarum they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than their mouth. So it is in men—most of whom are childish in the best things, till they be *cradled in their graves.*

As a story-teller, he adds to the list of tale-writers like Peele, Greene, Lodge, and Lyly.

(3) His *Defense of Poesy* places him at the head of the list of critics and scholars, like **Wilson, Ascham,**

and **Cheke**. Ascham's *Scholemaster* is our earliest work on education. Cheke was also an educationalist, and master of an incisive prose style.

If riches offend you, because ye would have the like, then think that to be no commonwealth, but envy to the commonwealth. Envy it is to appair another man's estate, without the amendment of your own; and to have no gentlemen, because ye be none yourselves, is to bring down an estate, and to mend none. Would ye have all alike rich? That is the overthrow of all labour, and utter decay of work in this realm. For who will labour more, if, when he hath gotten more, the idle shall by lust, without right, take what him list from him, under pretence of equality with him? This is the bringing in of idleness, which destroyeth the commonwealth, and not the amendment of labour, which maintaineth the commonwealth.

The excellence of his style is that it is argumentative, its fault that it is polemical. Had he and **Latimer** devoted themselves less to controversial subjects, they might have produced a more durable prose. As it is, Cheke is our first writer of really idiomatic English; if Sidney is the sixteenth-century Ruskin, Cheke is its Macaulay.

3. Prose.

The more distinguished prose writers of this age, as will be seen from the opposite Scheme, divide into two classes—the Deliberative and the Epigrammatic. In each class there is an earlier group and a later—in the Scheme a lower and an upper. They are connected with each other through the central figure of Bacon, who is both epigrammatic and deliberative; and it will be observed from the specimens given, that as the deliberative style of More, passing through Bacon, is expanded into that of Hooker, the epigrammatic style of Lyly, passing also through Bacon, is tempered into that of Hall.

DELIBERATIVE.

HOOKER.

That which hath greatest force in the very things we see, is notwithstanding itself oftentimes not seen. The stateliness of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them, delighteth the eye; but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministereth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosom of the earth concealed; and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary than pleasant, both to them which undertake it, and for the lookers on. In like manner the use and benefit of good laws; all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the grounds and first original causes from whence they have sprung be unknown, as to the greatest part of men they are.

EPIGRAMMATIC.

HALL.

Here is a tree overlaid with blossoms: it is not possible that all these should prosper; one of them must needs rob the other of moisture and growth. I do not love to see an infancy over-hopeful; in these pregnant beginnings one faculty starves another, and at last leaves the mind sapless and barren; as, therefore, we are wont to pull off some of the too frequent blossoms, that the rest may thrive, so it is good wisdom to moderate the early excess of the parts, or progress of over-forward childhood. Neither is it otherwise in our Christian profession; a sudden and lavish ostentation of grace may fill the eye with wonder, and the mouth with talk, but will not at the last fill the lap with fruit.

BACON.

Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

MORE.

Therefore I must say that, as I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the other governments that I see or know, than that they are a conspiracy of the rich, who on pretence of managing the public only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find out; first, that they may, without danger, preserve all that they have so ill acquired, and then that they may engage the poor to toil and labour for them at as low rates as possible, and oppress them as much as they please. And if they can but prevail to get these contrivances established by the show of public authority, which is considered as the representative of the whole people, then they are accounted laws.

LYLY.

The sharp north-east wind doth never last three days; tempests have but a short time; and the more violent the thunder is, the less permanent it is. In the like manner, it falleth out with the jars and crossings of friends, which, begun in a minute, are ended in a moment. Necessary it is that among friends there should be some over-thwarting; but to continue in anger, not convenient. The camel first troubleth the water before he drink; the frankincense is burned before it smell; friends are tried before they are trusted, lest, like the carbuncle, as though they had fire they be found, being touched, to be without fire. . . . Where salt doth grow, nothing else can breed; where friendship is built, no offence can harbour.

These writers are strongly characteristic figures in an age that was full of character, notably **Sir Thomas More** (1480—1535), a wit, a theorist, a philanthropist, a man of spirit, and of scrupulous if somewhat pragmatical conscientiousness. The incident of his marrying the elder of two sisters whom he liked least, that she might not feel slighted, is well known. A civilian, he met his death at the hands of the executioner with the coolness of Raleigh; a lawyer and Lord Chancellor—the first layman to occupy that office in the most feudal country in Europe—he published one of the most revolutionary of social pamphlets. From the theories of a social reformer it is not always easy to infer his practice, but from the unworldliness and public spirit of More it is easy to guess the complexion of his opinions. The suggestions of his *Utopia*, that political voting ought to be secret and the death penalty for theft abolished, have only passed into English law within the present century; another, that property ought to be abolished, is generally considered too paradoxical to be even matter of debate. It is no wonder that ideas which in an advanced age would be regarded as truisms, and in a half-advanced age persecuted as heresies, should in his own time have been smiled at as absurdities. The general idea of More's Utopia, like that of Plato's Republic, is that of a refined, primitive, and orderly commonwealth, whose object is spiritual as distinct from material prosperity, and whose motive power is public spirit as opposed to private interest; in which he anticipates the Ruskinian or advanced school of social economy; nor in his sketch of society as it ought to be is he free from Ruskinian satire of society as it is.

The peculiar style of **Lyly** (1553—1601), schoolmaster and novelist, has laid him open to more satire in the way of parody than any other author in the literature,

Samuel Johnson not excepted. From the name of the hero of his tale, *Euphues the Athenian*, was derived the term Euphuism, to characterise that mixture of forced metaphor, oddity of expression, and persistent affectation of literary form, which makes Lyly the first author of deliberate mannerism in the literature. But from the specimen given, it will be seen that the satire is not altogether just; and it is unjust relatively as well as absolutely; for the reproach applies in a certain degree to other authors of the time, such as Sidney and Shakspere. Nor is it just to his age. That constant antithesis and studied form is not the fault of a very early literature, too careless of brilliancy in composition; nor is it, so far as Lyly was concerned, the fault of a literature in its decadence: it is the fault of a literature in its adolescence, conscious of possibilities it has not learned to develop, and of powers it has not learned to restrain. In the later epigrammatists we shall find how soon this lesson was taken to heart.

Meantime in **Bacon** (1561—1626) we have not only the union of the two styles of the period, but the culmination of the styles and tendencies of the prose of all the preceding periods: a writer who more than sums up the activity of his predecessors, whether legal, as in Bracton and Fortescue; scientific, as in Bede and Roger Bacon; or philosophic, as in Scotus and Erigena. Intellectually he had nothing to borrow from them, not even from More, for he too had his ideal commonwealth, his *New Atlantis*, situated in the then suspected but not discovered continent of Australia; though it is safe to say that had he had a larger share of More's humour and high spirit, he would have borne a higher character as a man. The worldliness of Bacon's career, the luxuriousness and *laissez-faire* of his temperament, the traces of a disposition savouring sometimes more of

the Oriental and the diplomatist than of the Englishman and the philosopher, have left their mark upon a character not of the strongest nor yet of the weakest, which would never have incurred the same amount of public odium, had that not been accompanied by a comparison with his position as a lawyer, and an exaggerated estimate of his pretensions as a thinker. Pope's dictum, "the greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind," only emphasises the popular antithesis on the subject, which is as erroneous on the one side as on the other.

In conceding the superiority of Bacon as a philosopher to many of his predecessors, we must admit his inferiority to some of his successors. The difference in scientific power between him and his namesake, the Friar, is far less than between himself and Newton. Nor can it be said that the question was one not of science but of philosophy; for it was Bacon's special claim and special service that he made philosophy a matter of physical science. As little can it be said that Newton was indebted for his science to Bacon. He was born a greater physicist than Bacon, as he was born a greater mathematician than Descartes; and so far from science being indebted for its Newtonian and other discoveries to Bacon, these have been due in the first place to experimental methods more delicate than he could have devised, and in the second to deductive methods which he would hardly have been able even to understand. What is significant in his position is not so much that he is the leader of a new school of thought, as that he is the point of transition between the new and the old. No man could more contemptuously have repudiated the methods of the Schoolmen; no one has given such proof of ability to beat the Schoolmen on their own ground: as may be seen in his treatment of the various "instances," "prerogative," "clandestine," "heteroclite,"

etc., descriptive of the manner according to which a fact may behave under experiment, and distinguished with a subtlety surpassing Aristotle and Aquinas. No man who has so persistently preached the necessity of attending to the rules of Induction and Verification, has more conspicuously broken them, supporting his conclusions with arguments weak even for a lawyer, and hypotheses fanciful even for a Schoolman: as may be seen in his general treatment of the nature of Heat, though that is the most remarkable of his physical discoveries. The truth is that Bacon's distaste for metaphysics was due not so much to its being false as to its being barren, his preference for physical inquiry not so much to its being true as to its being useful; and hence the difference between his mode of regarding nature and Newton's. His first great principle, for instance, that of extending to physical science the experimental methods of every-day art, was insisted upon only as a basis to the second, that of *extending to every-day art the applications of physical science*; of which we have a special instance in the researches of Pasteur, that, beginning in mere curiosity as to the behaviour of crystals, have led to practical results of such magnitude for the welfare of the race. But though Bacon's suggestions are often more speculative than sound, though he traded sometimes on borrowed security, and in expectation of a rise in the market value of science, it must be remembered (1) that his estimate of the possibilities of science, made three hundred years ago, could not have been more exact had he written it to-day; (2) that he shows not only a great comprehensiveness of scientific observation, and knowledge of the nature of scientific process, but here and there—as in his remarks on Heat—that insight into physical truth which raises the man of talent into the man of genius; and (3) that whether in his *Novum Organum*, his *Advancement*

of the Sciences, or his collection of scientific illustrations, the *Sylva Sylvarum*, he writes always as a philosophic artist, a greater and more deliberate than Plato.

This faculty alone, and the comprehensiveness of his style, have largely contributed to his reputation as a philosopher. But if his success as a thinker is largely due to his power as a writer, his success as a writer is also due to his power as a thinker. The *Essays* owe their principal charm to this very circumstance, that they are (1) exercises in the art of massive composition, the art of putting the greatest amount of matter into the smallest space; assisted by the fact that they are (2) exercises in the art of symmetrical composition, and (3) that their subject is the most interesting and profound of studies, viz., human nature. Their fault is the want of relief. A perfect style does not consist wholly of aphorisms, any more than a plum-pudding consists wholly of plums. The mass wants elegance, the symmetry variety, the treatment of human nature fancy and the play of humour.

Hooker (1553—1600) has not the weight or the velocity, the depth or the brilliance of Bacon. He is one of the adjective men of the literature: as Bede is the "venerable," Gower the "moral," Ben Jonson the "rare," Dryden the "glorious," Hooker is the "judicious." In character his modesty went beyond moderation. His biographer, Bishop Gauden, tells us with a profusion of italics that his manner was "modestly dejected," "his soul more retired and looking inward than expatiating at the eyes," his conversation "rather parsimonious than prodigal"; but as a specimen of the way in which biography was then written, not only does he not give the most characteristic instance of Hooker's simplicity, viz., his marriage, but actually advances the fact of his never having married as a proof of his inno-

cence. Now if it might be said of any man that he was not only married, but too much married, this might be said of Hooker; who, taking a wife on the recommendation of her mother, found himself tied to a lady requiring more strict obedience than the thirty-nine articles, and who, when his friends first came to visit him, called him away to rock the cradle.

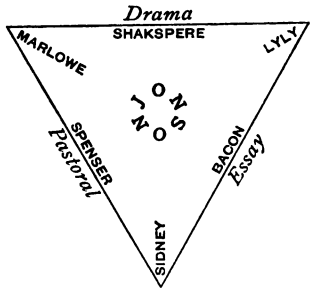
His next most characteristic piece of submissiveness occurs in his public life. Master of the Temple Church, at a time when the Anglican system was in danger, not so much of relapsing into the Romish as of conversion to the Presbyterian, and finding himself in personal opposition to one of the preachers, who taught the Calvinistic doctrine that the law of all Church government was contained in the New Testament, he resigned his charge, that he might put his ideas into writing, and retired into the country, where he brought to bear upon the controversy a mind naturally inclined to balance the pros and cons of any course of procedure and a temperament singularly averse to extremes. To Hooker the system of the English Church was an exact mean between that of the other two, a neutral tint between the Romish scarlet and the Presbyterian true-blue; the position of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, as against the latter, being identical with that of Pecock as against the Lollards in the previous age, viz., that a certain discretion had been left to pure reason in supplementing the teaching of Scripture. Upon his own showing, therefore, the point was of minor importance, since the Scripture had not thought it one worth while to pronounce upon; and in that case it is a condemnation of the design of his work in eight books, that it runs to a length which would have included not only the New Testament, but the Novum Organum of Bacon and the Principia of Newton; while the best of its execution lies in those

parts which have nothing to do with the immediate subject, but treat of laws in general. Hooker can both generalise and distinguish, and so writes as a philosopher; but weight of matter and wealth of style are proportioned to worth of subject, and Hooker, though a methodical, is not a systematic thinker, nor a majestic, though he is a dignified writer.

Among the later epigrammatists **Bishop Hall** (1574—1656) takes the leading place, rather for variety of acquirement and fertility, than for any real superiority in technical skill to **Burton**, **Dekker**, and **Overbury**. Hall and Overbury unite quaint humour with spiritual feeling; all four excel in what may be called the art of characterisation, whether dissective, as in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a study of the various forms and causes of hypochondria, or descriptive, as in Hall's *Characters of Vices and Virtues*, Dekker's *Gull's Horn-book*, and the *Characters* of Overbury. This last book includes such types as the Tinker, the Franklin, and the Milkmaid; and in this portrait of that lady it will be seen how skilfully the artist, improving almost upon Chaucer, has blended reflection with keen observation and ingenuity with tenderness.

All her excellences stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel, which is herself, is far better than outsides of tissue; for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silkworm, she is decked in innocence, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long in bed, spoil both her complexion and conditions: nature hath taught her, too, immoderate sleep is rust to the soul; she rises, therefore, with Chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. . . . Her breath is her own, which scents, all the year long, of June, like a new-made haycock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity; and when winter evenings fall early, sitting at her merry wheel, she sings defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. . . . She bestows her year's wages at next fair, and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world like

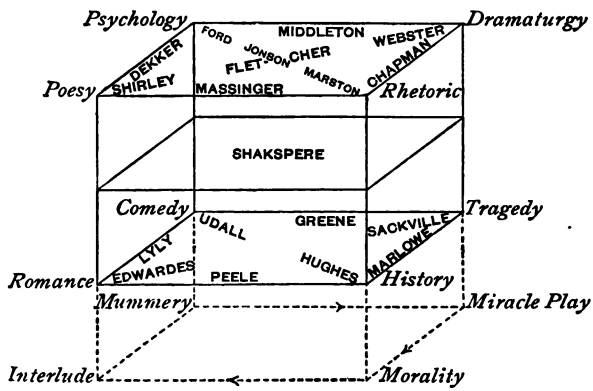
decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and surgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone, and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none; yet, to say truth, she is never alone, but is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers. . . . Thus lives she, and all her care is, she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.



The student who takes an interest in tracing the relations of the Pastoral and Essay in this age to the Drama may readily do so by means of the diagram, where the names of Spenser, Bacon, and Shakspere, representing each a single department, are connected through the minor authors (at the corners of the triangle) who excel in two. It is noticeable that the author, to whom the others converge, who excels in all three departments, and who in that respect is the most central writer of his age, is Ben Jonson.

IV.

THE ROMANTIC DRAMA (1550—1650).



THE Drama,* which did not appear in force till Poesy and Prose were approaching maturity, had its foundation as deep as either. It dates from the time when, business of all sorts being done at Fairs, minstrels, jugglers, and buffoons were retained by the merchants to stimulate custom. Now (1) if the drama is to be artistic in treatment, it must be a literary performance, not an illiterate, as this was; if (2) it is to be congruous in treatment, it must in any case be secular, and not religious; if (3) it is to be interesting, it must deal with persons, not with

* In the Figure the names of writers who excel in one department are placed in the corresponding *corner* of the plane to which they belong, those who excel in two, along the *lines* joining the respective corners; reversing the method of the last and subsequent diagrams.

abstractions; and (4) if its treatment is to be independent, the composition must be principal, and not subordinate. So that if we find four combinations of these qualities, each of which is wanting in one of them, the first in the first, the second in the second, etc., we may arrange them as follows, the quality italicised being that which is defective in each:

1.	2.
Illiterate. Secular.	Literary. *Religious.*
Principal. Concrete.	Principal. Concrete.
4.	3.
Literary. Secular.	Literary. Secular.
Subordinate. Concrete.	Principal. *Abstract.*

This scheme, corner for corner, will be found to correspond with the dotted plane in the diagram.

1. It is obvious that the first of these, defective in the most vital point, viz., that it is not literature at all, corresponds to the era of the mountebank just described, which we may call that of the MUMMERY.

2. The persons to correct this defect were, of course, the educated body, the clergy, who, moreover, at their own private theatricals in the monasteries, had been in the habit of giving short theological dramas, after the style of the classical comedy. Determined to suppress the grosser features of the Mummery, but unable to suppress the public character of the performances, they endeavoured to give it a turn for the better by making it Religious, thus introducing a defect of their own; and this product of the booth and the monastery, which coincides with the second of these compartments, was the MIRACLE-PLAY, or MYSTERY, so styled according as the subject was drawn from the lives of the Saints or ordinary Biblical narrative on the one hand, or the more sacred New Testament themes on the other. This took place about fifty years after the Norman Conquest, the plays

being acted in the churches or the churchyards; and, as they took their names from the Lenten, Whitsun, and other religious seasons at which they were performed, it is evident that the Festival had superseded the Fair. When, after another hundred and fifty years, the clergy ceased to interest themselves in the performances, and they fell into the hands of the corporations, these titles became complicated with the names of the places where the pieces were played, such as Towneley, Coventry, and Chester, whose collections, to the number of ninety-nine, are still extant. The plays were now held in the yards of inns or the streets, the stage machinery being still of the rudest description, and the dialogue of an order to correspond. Noah, in a Miracle-Play belonging to the Chester collection, and performed by the water-leaders of the River Dee, swears by St. John; and there are more curious points in the pieces than anachronism. The Deity appeared in a wig among the angels, and the whole performance was characterised by the same grotesque and stolid realism.

3. There is nothing extraordinary in this, however, if we remember that the Bible was not only the source of the plot but the acting edition of the play; and when the religious element was eliminated, and the secular re-introduced, as the withdrawal of the clergy made it sure to be sooner or later, the incongruity vanished, if not the stupidity or the buffoonery. But this second defect was corrected only to introduce a third, in those abstractions which took the place of real personages; Vices and Virtues being now represented instead of Fiends and Saints, while allegorical and proverbial motives, such as "The Castle of Perseverance," "The Longer thou livest the more Fool thou art," superseded the stories of the Creation and the Flood. This combination, corresponding to the third compartment in

question, was the Moral Play, or MORALITY, of which we find such extreme specimens as "The Marriage of Science and Art," where the latter rescues the former from her mortal enemy, the giant Tediousness. A distinguished author in this line was **Skelton**, with his play *Magnyfycence*, written "to show the vanity of worldly grandeur."

4. Meantime the humour, and with it the sense of character, which had been banished from the serious play, reappeared in the INTERLUDE (corresponding to the fourth compartment), where they were perfectly in place, but which was a mere fugitive piece, introduced between the acts of the Morality. Nor was it to any purpose that **John Heywood**, the author of a number of these pieces, and others introduced what they called the Moral Interlude, which had the charm of gaiety without the humour of the Interlude proper. What the Interlude wanted was the comprehensive interest of the Morality, in the same way that the latter wanted the emotional interest of the Interlude. And when the Interlude, moving in the direction of independence, reversed its subordinate position, and became *Comedy*, the Morality moved in the direction of passion, and became *Tragedy*. When, in turn, Comedy, falling into the hands of men of poetic feeling, received an impulse from the sense of beauty, and became *Romance*, Tragedy, seeking its subjects in the field of fact, became *History*. And it will be seen from this diagram that as, on the comic side, Romance is the great-grandchild of the Mummery, History, on the serious, is the great-grandchild of the Miracle-Play.

Mummery.	*Miracle-Play.*
Interlude.	*Morality.*
↓	↓
Comedy.	*Tragedy.*
Romance.	*History.*

The first group, or lowest plane of the diagram at the head of the chapter, is thus the Prologue to the *Trilogy of the Romantic Drama.* The other coincides with the second plane of the diagram, or that relating to the immediate forerunners of Shakspere.

1. Predecessors of Shakspere.

These divide into two groups, an earlier and a later; the first consisting of the authors who are distinguished only in one department, the other consisting of those who excel in two.

Comedy.—It follows from the previous statement that the boundaries of Comedy and Romance, like those of Tragedy and History, have never been clearly defined, and in days when even Tragedy and Comedy were not clearly distinguished, it is no wonder that we find the nomenclature defective. But there can be no question that **Udall's** *Ralph Roister Doister* is rightly styled our first English Comedy. Ralph is a conceited fellow, who goes wooing an engaged lady, and a genuine stage trick is introduced in a letter he writes her, the punctuation of which makes it the reverse of what he intends to say. The play is in five acts and in rhyme.

M. Merry. Let us see your letter.
C. Custance. Hold, read it if ye can,
And see what letter it is to win a woman.
M. Merry. "To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart, and pigsny,
Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by."
Of this superscription do ye blame the style?
C. Custance. With the rest, as good stuff as ye read a great while.
M. Merry. "Sweet Mistress, whereas I love you nothing at all,
Regarding your substance and riches chief of all;
For your personage, beauty, demeanour, and wit,
I commend me unto you never a whit.

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,
For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour of no living man,
To be abhorred of every honest man.
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice,
Nothing at all to virtue giving her due price."

Tragedy.—Nor is there any doubt that the scenes of civil war and domestic murder which occur in the *Gorboduc* of **Sackville** and his friend **Norton** entitle it to the position of our first English Tragedy. It is also in five acts, but written in blank verse, the flow of which is more easy and sustained than one might have expected at this period, though less remarkable in these respects, and certainly less rich and imaginative, than we have a right to expect from Sackville. When Gorboduc, who is a British king, neglects the warning not to divide the empire between his sons, a warning justified by the event, for one slays the other, and is then slain by his mother, Marcella, one of the queen's ladies, exclaims:

Mar. Oh hard and cruel hap, that thus assigned
Unto so worthy a wight so wretched end;
But most hard cruel heart, that could consent
To lend the hateful destinies that hand,
By which, alas, so heinous crime was wrought.
O queen of adamant, O marble breast,
If not the favour of his comely face,
If not his princely cheer and countenance,
His valiant active arms, his manly breast,
If not his fair and seemly personage,
His noble limbs in such proportion cast
As would have wrapt a silly woman's thought;
If this might not have moved thy bloody heart,
And that most cruel hand the wretched weapon
Even to let fall, and kissed him in the face,
With tears for ruth to reave such one by death;
Should nature yet consent to slay her son?
Oh mother, thou to murder thus thy child!

This is a specimen of the verse at its best. But the

remarkable fact is that blank verse should have been used at all, seeing that Shakspere, with the success of Sackville and still more of Marlowe before him, was so slow to adopt it instead of rhyme.

History and Romance. — **Hughes'** *Misfortunes of Arthur*, and the *Damon and Pythias* of **Edwardes**, with other anonymous plays of the sort, are styled tragedies; but the subject of the first makes it more properly a History, that of the second a Romance.

One other circumstance separates this group of dramatists from those about to follow. The patronage of stage plays, which the Miracle-Play had lived to see transferred from the clergy to the guilds, the Morality had seen transferred to the Court and the learned bodies, such as the Inns of law and the Universities; and there it remained. There was as yet no *general* public, *i.e.*, no public composed both of the illiterate and the critical; and there was no theatre. Now a drama without a permanent habitation becomes lowered to the level of a strolling circus; and in the Blackfriars Theatre, built in 1576, the stage received the focus that it wanted and became practically a corporation of its own. Becoming a householder in the metropolis, and not a lodger, it gave an evidence of serious intentions, which produced a higher class of audiences; and this, reacting on the character of the performances, encouraged a higher class of actors and a nobler school of dramatists.

The theatre itself was hexagonal in form, on a piece of waste ground in what is now the heart of London; the time of representation, as it is to-day, after dinner, *i.e.*, making allowance for the change in the dinner-hour, about three o'clock. Inside, the building was open to the sky, except over the stage, to which the aristocratic part of the audience had access, and it is to be presumed smoked and chattered through the play, as the manner,

especially among the more youthful and precocious, of such persons is. The scenery was still of the rudest description, the curtain a blanket, the actresses boys in women's clothes. So that mechanically the stage was on a much lower level than it was intellectually, with all its expedients to discover, all its traditions to create for itself; while socially the condition of most of the actors was no better. The upper classes, who did not trouble to distinguish between the mere actor and the dramatist, were not the more likely to do so when the dramatist, as often happened, was actor as well. The only corrective to this would have been the personal dignity and refinement of the dramatist; but in the very ablest of them there was little of either quality to recognise. Their *esprit de corps*, the very consciousness of their powers, seems only to have increased their lawlessness and obliterated their self-respect. To see these men in their daily haunts one might have supposed them in training, not for the higher prizes of literature, but for the gallows. Peele lived in utter profligacy; Greene came back from his tour of the Continent the most vicious Englishman of his time, consorted with the lowest class of criminals, and died of a surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine; Marlowe, then the most promising mind of the stage, was killed in a disreputable brawl, a murderer in intention who might have been a murderer in act—men, all of them, of innocent parentage, country breeding, and University education, with no predisposition to vice but their own high spirits and reckless animalism; boastful, spendthrift, and unscrupulous, writing works of brilliant fancy and delicate poesy, with their visible horizon the tavern and the debtor's prison. Such was Bohemia in the most unsympathetic to Bohemianism of European capitals, and among members of the most Bohemian of pro-

fessions. But if it requires some presence of mind to realise that such a degradation of literature was possible in the days of Sidney and Spenser, it demands no stretch of charity to judge of the art of these dramatists apart from their character, rather than condemn the character in the light of the art; to respect that force of inspiration by which they were guided, though among cross currents and on a lee shore, to results of such true beauty and workmanship; and to recognise that if they wrote as they lived, to please themselves, this wilfulness was in part the expression of a necessity to vindicate for their art an obedience to that law, and for themselves a fellowship among the children of that light, which in their lives had been neglected and profaned.

Comedy and Tragedy. — More importance must be attached to the "Repentance" of **Greene** than to ordinary death-bed confessions. It is the story of a man whose life was a drama, written by a dramatist, and that dramatist the man himself, capable therefore at all points to trace out the significance of a career which fain would have been comedy and perforce turned out tragedy. Greene was no death-bed tragedian. That vein in him was sufficiently attested in the tragedy of *Orlando Furioso*; though his Comic vein was superior. *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* shows a great advance upon Udall. The play turns upon the love of Prince Edward, son of Henry III., for the Keeper's Daughter of Fressingfield, and his invoking the good offices of Friar Bacon. The incident has happy invention and quick transition, the dialogue wit and spirit; and in Margaret, the Keeper's Daughter, the poetic sense which breaks out in the beauty of the verse has presented us with a pastoral figure not unworthy to foreshadow Shakspere's Perdita, that other "queen of curds and cream."

Whenas she swept like Venus through the house,
And in her shape fast folded up my thoughts,
Into the milk-house went I with the maid,
And there amongst the cream-bowls she did shine
As Pallas 'mongst her princely huswifery:
She turn'd her smock over her lily arms,
And div'd them into milk to run her cheese;
But whiter than the milk her crystal skin,
Checkèd with lines of azure, made her blush
That art or nature durst bring for compare.
Ermsby,
If thou hadst seen, as I did note it well,
How beauty play'd the huswife, how this girl,
Like Lucrece, laid her fingers to the work,
Thou wouldst, with Tarquin, hazard Rome and all
To win the lovely maid of Fressingfield.

Tragedy and History.—If Greene anticipates Shakspere in this lighter vein, **Marlowe** approaches him in the more serious, the humour mingled with bold metaphor and pregnant suggestion, the sustained rhetoric, the structure of the verse, the power of historical dramatisation. How insensibly Shakspere had caught the cadence of some of Marlowe's lines may be seen by comparing the passage in "Hamlet," beginning

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

with the following:

'Tis not a black coat and a little band,
A velvet cap'd cloak, fac'd before with serge,
And smelling to a nose-gay all the day,
Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
Or saying a long grace at a table's end,
Or making low legs to a nobleman,
Or looking downward with your eyelids close,
And saying, "Truly, an't may please your honour,"
Can get you any favour with great men.
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute.

But Marlowe's blank verse is not always the same supple

and complex instrument as Shakspere's, though there is an advance in this, as in other branches of his art, between *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and his second historical play, *Edward the Second*. The unity of motive in the earlier plays—the first of which exhibits the lust of empire, the second the lust of power, the third the lust of vindictive avarice—is more dramatic than didactic. They have the character common to plays that are tragic *par excellence*, of dealing rather with crude passion and momentary effect than with cumulative action and complex motive, and of moving in a plane as far as may be divided from that of ordinary life. They are also more purely scenical in conception than is demanded by the drama for catholic presentation of life and character. It is only in "Edward the Second" that Marlowe made the discovery—a discovery which has to be made in literature as in science, and in drama as in poetry—that in the universal and the *a posteriori*, not the exceptional and the *a priori*, is to be found the true source of human interest and interpretation; with the result that in the natural history of Edward and Isabella, Gaveston and Mortimer, we have a drama where conflict of motive itself supplies the balance of the plot, and the poetic feeling of the piece arises spontaneously out of the dramatic situation:

K. Edw. My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclop's hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah, had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,
And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead,
When I was forc'd to leave my Gaveston!
Lan. Diablo! what passions call you these?
Q. Isab. My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.
K. Edw. That you have parlèd with your Mortimer?
Q. Isab. That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repeal'd.

K. Edw. Repeal'd! the news is too sweet to be true.
Q. Isab. But will you love me if you find it so?
K. Edw. If it be so, what will not Edward do?
Q. Isab. For Gaveston, but not for Isabel.
K. Edw. For thee, fair queen, if thou lov'st Gaveston,
I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck,
Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success.
Q. Isab. No other jewels hang about my neck
Than these, my lord; nor let me have more wealth
Than I may fetch from this rich treasury.
Oh, how a kiss revives poor Isabel!
K. Edw. Once more receive my hand; and let this be
A second marriage 'twixt thyself and me.

History and Romance. — **Peele's** *Famous Chronicle History of Edward the First* not only connects him with the other historic playwrights, but is a very pure specimen of the early Historic Drama. His romantic vein is more characteristic. *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* is not only no revival of or survival from the Miracle-Play, but expressly marks the decline of all religious association connected with the drama, the subject being chosen, not for its sanctity, but for its poetry.

Dav. Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.
To joy her love I'll build a kingly bower,
Seated in hearing of a hundred streams,
That, for their homage to her sovereign joys,
Shall, as the serpents fold into their nests
In oblique turnings, wind their nimble waves
About the circles of her curious walks,
And with their murmur summon easeful sleep
To lay his golden sceptre on her brows.

Peele's poetry in general is sensuous, fine in colour and melody; but he wants force and humour.

Romance and Comedy.—The subjects of **Lyly's** plays, such as *Endymion* and *Galatea*, are classical, and the treatment romantic. His *Alexander and Campaspe* is a

fine specimen of romantic comedy. It is the story of a Theban girl, whom Alexander the Great, having taken captive and become enamoured of, commissions Apelles to paint; but painter and model falling in love with each other, Alexander conquers his passion and gives his blessing to the pair. Into this symmetrical plot are introduced characters no less interesting than Aristotle and Diogenes; and the vein of comedy is wrought with a delicacy and a vivacity, a play of repartee and epigram, which we hardly find again till the time of Farquhar and Sheridan. From the extract it will be seen how the rhetoric of Euphuism, curtailed by the necessities of the dialogue, its fancy chastened by contact with character, and its wit by combination with humour, forms a style of writing which is more worthy the imitation of Shakspere than the parody of Scott.

Melip. I had never such ado to warn scholars to come before a king. First, I came to Crisippus, a tall, lean, old mad man, willing him presently to appear before Alexander. He stood staring on my face, neither moving his eyes nor his body. I urging him to give some answer, he took up a book, sat down, and said nothing. Melissa, his maid, told me it was his manner, and that oftentimes she was fain to thrust meat into his mouth, for that he would rather starve than cease study. Well, thought I, seeing bookish men are so blockish, and great clerks such simple courtiers, I will neither be partaker of their commons nor their commendations. From thence I came to Plato and to Aristotle, and to divers other; none refusing to come, save an old obscure fellow, who, sitting in a tub turned towards the sun, read Greek to a young boy. Him, when I willed to appear before Alexander, he answered, "If Alexander would fain see me, let him come to me; if learn of me, let him come to me; whatsoever it be, let him come to me." "Why," said I, "he is a king." He answered, "Why, I am a philosopher." "Why, but he is Alexander." "Ay, but I am Diogenes."

2. Shakspere.

Life and Circumstances.—**William Shakspere** (1564—1616) was born at Stratford-on-Avon, the eldest son of

well-to-do parents, the mother a lady of small property, the father a wool-stapler and glover, a mayor and magistrate of the town. He received a fair elementary education. From the account given of his early doings in Stratford, it would seem that he had first been apprentice to his father's business; but by the time he reached the age of twenty-two, the irresistible expansion of his literary power left him in no doubt as to the direction in which his mental bias was tending, and forced him to seek an outlet in London. Other motives, such as his father's embarrassments, or his own, resulting from a too early marriage, and the difficulty of providing for his family, could have had no real influence on this decision, or on a literary career so spontaneous from first to last. Through Hathaway, the dramatist, who was probably a kinsman of his wife, he may in the first instance have obtained such employment as was then open to any aspirant for the stage, as actor or author; and by dint of the faculties which became notable during his after career, (1) his intellectual pliancy and application, (2) his business capacity, (3) his power of conciliating the general good-will, he rose without exceptional ease but without great hardship through the stages of adaptation and collaboration to that of independent authorship (*Love's Labour's Lost*, published in 1590) and theatrical proprietorship. At the age of thirty he published his *Lucrece*, which greatly raised his reputation, and two years later his *Romeo and Juliet* took the town by storm. These two were his critical pieces in the way of professional success; of the extent of which we may judge by the facts (1) that they brought Shakspere the esteem and friendship of men like Lords Pembroke and Southampton; (2) that soon after Shakspere was able to procure the acceptance of any play at the theatre where he acted, as in the case of

Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour"; (3) that he was obliged to submit to the imposition of booksellers, who affixed his name to publications with whose authorship he had no connection; (4) that we find him beginning to purchase property both in London and Stratford. This last probably marks an intention, which he eventually carried out, of retiring from the stage to his native place, where he composed the two stupendous dramas *The Tempest* and the *Winter's Tale*, and where in 1616, at the height of his powers and in the full tide of prosperity, he died.

As to Shakspere's character, it may be said that no personality of which we have so little direct information could be easier to reconstruct or understand. There is a science of comparative psychology as well as anatomy; and though it would be futile to take as Shakspere's, or referring to his experience, any opinion that any of his characters may happen to express, it would be absurd to suppose that any man is capable sympathetically to express any feeling that he is incapable of sharing. That Shakspere was a man of strong animal temperament, matched by a profound sense of responsibility (the root of all moral senses), that he was a man of haughty temper and high spirit, masked by a natural gentleness and courtesy, never found except in such conjunction, is neither a secret to those who read the plays in the light of human nature, nor paradox to any who know that in the balance of his faculties is to be found the key to his moral as well as intellectual constitution. In private life he was a man to make himself respected by the same sympathetic penetration into motive and character by which he made himself beloved; for it was his perquisite, and distinguished him from other typical Englishmen of genius, like Newton and Turner, that he brought to bear upon ordinary intercourse the imaginative

faculty which made him an artist, but whose exercise with them was restricted to their profession. *Technically* human nature was his subject, not theirs, as well as the medium in which he lived; and it was this same sympathetic faculty which made him socially the focus of the brotherhood of dramatists that his general powers made him intellectually, and caused the most independent and obstreperous of them all to be precisely his closest friend and most devout admirer, "this side of idolatry."

Development as a Dramatist. — To London from Warwickshire Shakspere brought little beyond his knowledge of rustic character and scenery; but it is noticeable how in his first plays all this is left in the background, and exchanged for the sterner necessities of civic life. In *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, where the idyllic feeling might be expected to predominate, we find only a mediaeval city rich in civic association; the plot based on a story of civic feud; the chief actors destined (had the course of love run smooth) to civic pre-eminence; the most striking figure in the piece, Mercutio, the beau-ideal of the gay man of the world and man about town. Then comes a second period, beginning with the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and continued in *As You Like It*, in which the pastoral element strongly asserts itself, though not at the expense of the other; for it is precisely during this period that Shakspere's extraordinary Communal Sense receives its highest development. Of all his expedients to secure background and atmosphere for his plays, none is so successful or so frequent as this exhibition of public life, whether in relation to popular feeling, public spirit, or official responsibility. The Historic Plays had all along showed that national sense which is a particular case of the one described; but there was more than this, more even than his handling

of these three subtle elements, the omnipresence of public opinion, the omniscience of public rumour, the omnipotence of public authority, as in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, when, in *Julius Caesar*, *Timon*, and *Coriolanus*, he shows us the populace itself in deadly collision with public men. This marks a climax in the feeling, which has become overwhelming and almost painful, and introduces the third period, where the civic instinct gives place to the pure affection for nature, whether in the savagery of the *Tempest* or the exquisite pastoral incident of the *Winter's Tale*. It is true that public functionaries, like kings and queens, still play their part; but their functions are no longer civic but domestic. And it is now, in these dramas of domestic affection, that the completed art of Shakspere allows him to unite both court and country, and to return with freshened instinct to the rustic festivities of his youth; nor does it lessen the interest in the man to know that he has coloured the pies at the shearing feast in the "Winter's Tale" with the saffron of the local housewife, and decked Perdita with the flowers that may have flourished on the bosom of his own Mistress Hathaway.

Technically the twenty-four years of Shakspere's literary activity, 1588—1612, divide into two equal portions; each of which again divides into two. The first group (excluding Tragedy) are the *Histories* and *Comedies*, History preponderating in the first section, Comedy in the second; the second group are the *Tragedies* and *Romances*, Tragedy preponderating in the first section, Romance in the second. The first of the four periods is strongest in the element of purely sensuous beauty and conscious ingenuity; the second in pure comedy; the third in drawing of character and grasp of dramatic situation; the fourth in spiritual feeling and finished

HISTORY AND COMEDY (1588—1600)

Titus Andronicus.

1588—1594.

HISTORY.	COMEDY.	HISTORY.
Henry VI. (1).	Love's Labour's Lost. Comedy of Errors. Two Gent. of Verona. Mid. Night's Dream.	Henry VI. (2), (3). Richard III. Richard II. King John.

1594—1600.

COMEDY.	HISTORY.	COMEDY.
Merchant of Venice.	Henry IV. (1), (2). Henry V.	Taming of Shrew. M. Wives of Windsor. Much Ado ab. Nothing. As You Like It. Twelfth Night.

Romeo and Juliet.

TRAGEDY AND ROMANCE (1600—1612).

1600—1606.

TRAGEDY.	ROMANCE.	TRAGEDY.
Julius Caesar. Hamlet.	All's Well that Ends. Measure for Measure. Troilus and Cressida.	Othello. Lear. Macbeth.

1606—1612.

ROMANCE.	TRAGEDY.	ROMANCE.
Ant. and Cleopatra.	Coriolanus. Timon. Pericles.	Cymbeline. Tempest. Winter's Tale.

King Henry VIII. Two Noble Kinsmen.

workmanship—the feeling in which the love-making of Florimel and Perdita is superior to that of Romeo and Juliet, the workmanship of which the fluent versification, with the increase of the number of "run on" as compared with "end-stopt" lines, is only a particular case.

General Power as an Artist.—As in the case of Shakspere the personal achievement is merged in the national renown, so the standard of general criticism is merged in the individual. We do not say so much that Shakspere has this or the other quality, as that this or the other quality is "Shaksperean." And by that we mean much more than when we say such or such a touch is Spenserian, or Swiftian, or Miltonic, because that refers to some one particular quality in each; but in Shakspere the term applies to one *general* quality which characterises his work, whether humorous, pathetic, philosophic, or poetic. This constitutional quality consists in the spontaneity and pregnancy of Suggestion, combined with variety and harmony of Treatment, or

$$(s + p)\,\mathrm{S} + (v + h)\,\mathrm{T}.$$

It is not meant, of course, that every part of Shakspere's work has all these qualities in perfection. His characteristic is that he fulfils conditions, so hard to fulfil individually, so much harder to fulfil simultaneously, more frequently than any other author. Qualities like spontaneity and pregnancy, which the majority of writers have no more chance of reconciling than water has of combining mobility with density, are found combined in Shakspere, as these physical properties are combined in the rarer element of mercury.

> Never gazed
> The Moon upon the water, as he'll stand
> And read my daughter's eyes.

The unexpectedness and exhaustiveness of the suggestion

could not be surpassed; it may be better illustrated in detail:

> He has a son who shall be flayed alive, then anointed over with honey, and set on the head of a wasp's nest, then stand till he be three quarters and a dram dead, then recovered again with aqua-vitae, then raw as he is and in the hottest day prognostication proclaims shall he be set against a brick wall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him with flies blown to death.

This passage may also serve as a specimen of the variety and harmony of treatment; of which a remarkable instance is the manner in which the literary element in the plays, with the constant opportunities it affords for digression, is subordinated to the one dramatic purpose, the development of the action.

In detail, we have only to consider Shakspere's powers according to this scheme,

1. *Psychological*,	2. *Dramatic*,
4. *Poetic*,	3. *Rhetorical*,

to realise the nature of his superiority to other literary artists. In Psychology—embracing the whole field of humorous treatment, as well as philosophic reflection on human motive:

> That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
> Though they are made and moulded of things past,
> And give to dust that is a little gilt
> More laud than gilt o'erdusted;

and those flashes of insight into character, individual, national, or sexual:

> *Rosalind.* Do you not know I am a woman? When I think I must speak.

In Drama—embracing management of plot and incident; passion sudden and sustained; mastery of dramatic effect and significance, as in the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* where the man whose knocking startles the guilty pair is

the destined instrument of vengeance; dramatic situation, as when Hamlet rebukes his mother, thus inverting the order of nature, according to which it is the parent who rebukes the child:

> *Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
> *Ham.* Madam, you have my father much offended.

In Rhetoric—his unrivalled blank verse; his unrivalled mastery over all the forms of literary artifice; and his unique faculty of expression both sympathetic and creative:

> What, think'st
> That the bleak air, the boisterous chamberlain
> Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these moss'd trees,
> That have outlived the eagle, *page* thy heels
> And skip where thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,
> *Candied* with ice, *caudle* thy morning taste,
> To cure thy o'ernight's surfeit? Call the creatures,
> Whose naked natures live in all the spite
> Of *wreakful* heaven, whose bare unhousèd trunks,
> To the conflicting elements expos'd,
> Answer mere nature—bid them flatter thee.

In Poesy—the Lyrics, and the *Sonnets*, which, though they have not the full descriptive beauty of the *Venus and Adonis* and other passages, have the peculiar Elizabethan combination of trope and figure, with dialectical subtlety on the one hand and sheer music of lyrical feeling on the other, raised to a higher power and more exquisite harmony:

> My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming:
> I love not less, though less the show appear.
> That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
> The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
> Our love was new and then but in the spring
> When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
> As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
> And stops her pipe in growth of riper days.

Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

It would be easy to mention points in which Shakspere is inferior to other, especially prose writers. He was by limitation a dramatist, as Thackeray was by limitation a novelist. His supremacy lies in combination and the power to beat his rivals in detail — that as against Thackeray he can play off his faculty as a poet, as against Tennyson his knowledge of human nature—in the same way that Newton owes his supremacy in science to his union of gifts as mathematician and physicist: a supremacy on either side which will continue till some more fortunate mind arises, uniting the qualities of both.

3. Successors of Shakspere.

Besides establishing what may be called the grand manner of the Romantic Drama, Shakspere has developed a new set of standards of dramatic excellence, in conformity with that scheme of power just mentioned, which had superseded the old scheme of division into Comedy, Tragedy, etc. History in fact has now almost disappeared, and if we assign its place to Rhetoric, with the place of the others to the faculties marked in the diagram, we have a new scheme according to which the later dramatists (arranged in the upper plane of the diagram) may be compared by reference to Shakspere; and generally it may be said that those who come nearest to Shakspere in variety of faculty are those also who most resemble him in the grand manner. They may be divided into two groups, those excelling in two departments, and those in only one.

Psychology and Rhetoric.—The individuality of **Ben Jonson** (1573—1637) was that of a man of independent thought and manners, on occasion boastful and quarrelsome, self-conscious always and self-assertive, but capable of loyal affection to any who, like Shakspere or Bacon, had established a title to his gratitude. A bricklayer, a soldier, an actor, a dramatist, he owed his first success to the good offices of Shakspere, and by 1599, when *Every Man out of his Humour* was played, was an author of established reputation. His chief plays after this were *The Fox*, *The Silent Woman*, *The Alchemist*, and *The Staple of News*. They are all comedies; the kind of writing best adapted to the powers of a man who has wit, knowledge of human nature, and knowledge of life.

If you appear learned to an ignorant wench, or jocund to a sad, or witty to a foolish, why she presently begins to mistrust herself. You must approach them in their own height, their own line, for the contrary makes many that fear to commit themselves to noble and worthy fellows run into the embraces of a rascal. If she love wit, give verses, though you borrow them of a friend or buy them; if valour, talk of your sword. If she love good clothes or dressing, let your powder, your glass, and your comb be your dearest acquaintance. . . . Let your gifts be slight and dainty rather than precious. Give cherries at time of year, or apricots, and say they were sent you out of the country, though you bought them in Cheapside.

In so far as Jonson was a realist, and the motive and interest of his plays is *social*, he is the founder of modern English Comedy. His method of treating individual character, like Dickens's, consists in taking a single quality and throwing it into high relief. To this he adds a singularly intellectual style, and a singularly wide and accurate scholarship. The defect of his learning is that it is too frequently displayed; of his style, that its splendid acumen is not sufficiently tempered, its wisdom by poetry, its wit by humour; of his treatment of character, that its insight is into the weakness and

eccentricity of human nature rather than its nobility and strength, and that though Jonson writes both noble and exquisite poetry, such as his lines on Shakspere and his "For love's sake kiss me once again," he cannot invest even his female characters with the charm of Shaksperean romance. On the side of the intellectual faculties he shows a power of observation not discernible in Shakspere; while the prose of his *Discoveries*, consisting of reflections on character, criticism, and morals, has this in common with Milton's—from which it differs in being but fragmentary and of little bulk—that it has been unjustly neglected. As an essayist, both for form and matter, Jonson takes rank next to Bacon, from whose condensed and epigrammatic prose his own is often hardly to be distinguished. And if, as we have seen, his relation to the pastoral and other poetry of the Romantic age is only less remarkable than his connection with the dramatic, it must not be forgotten that he stands in a similar relation, not only to poets of the Pensive School, like Donne (whose claims will be noticed in the next chapter), but very markedly to those of the Pointed School, like Dryden and Pope—names of greater distinction than Donne, and separated from his own day by a wider interval. With what justice he may claim to be considered the original master of the poetic *Epistle*, this extract will show:

> I have the list of mine own faults to know,
> Look to, and cure; he's not a man hath none,
> But like to be, that every day mends one,
> And feels it, else he tarries by the beast.
> Can I discern how shadows are decreast,
> Or grown, by height or lowness of the sun,
> And can I less of substance? When I run,
> Ride, sail, am coached, know I how far I have gone,
> And my mind's motion not? Or have I none?
> No! he must feel and know, that will advance;
> Men have been great, but never good by chance,

Psychology and Drama.—None of the dramatists is so unequal as **Middleton** (*d.* 1627), whom Jonson succeeded in the office of City Chronologer; none comes so near Shakspere in the combined ease and concentration of style, and the unison of comic and tragic faculty, of which *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and *The Changeling* may be taken as specimens. An author who did not even begin to master his art until middle age, and whose first independent literary essays, *Father Hubbard's Tale* and *The Black Book*, were descriptions of London life, his instinct for character and his dramatic point are combined both in his comedy and tragedy. Hence his presentation of the repulsive De Flores is no mere freak of the melodramatist, seeking after lurid effect, or of the crude student of human nature wantoning in extremes, but the creation of an artist confident in his observation and working within the limits of his powers.

> *De F.* O my blood!
> Methinks I feel her in mine arms already;
> Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
> And being pleasèd, praising this bad face.
> Hunger and pleasure, they'll commend sometimes
> Slovenly dishes, and feed heartily on 'em,
> Nay, which is stranger, refuse daintier for 'em.
> Some women are odd feeders.—I am too loud.
> Here comes the man goes supperless to bed,
> Yet shall not rise to-morrow to his dinner.

Drama and Rhetoric.—Less witty and intellectual than Jonson, **Chapman** (1557—1634) has a sustained variety of excellence that belongs to no other of the later dramatists. His tragedy is interesting, if not always inventive; his comedy of solid and sometimes brilliant workmanship. A fine poet and a man of dignified character, he is an artist in the sense of crowning his many dramatic gifts with a clear method of treatment

and a finished execution. Had Chapman possessed more intensity of passion, had he relieved his stately rhetoric with more exquisite imagery, or intermingled the tragic vein of *Bussy d'Ambois* and *Byron's Conspiracy* with the humour of *Monsieur d'Olive* and *The Widow's Tears*, he would have clearly established his title to stand next Shakspere. The scene at the tomb in the latter comedy, where the disconsolate Eudora is wooed and won by her supposed deceased husband, shows his mastery of stage management, as the character of Monsieur d'Olive, the ambassador-elect, his skill in portraiture. In this shallow upstart we recognise Chapman's favourite note of Aspiration, the same that is found in Pharsalis, and the sterner ambitions of Byron and Bussy d'Ambois.

Heaven, I beseech thee, what an abominable sort of followers have I put upon me! These courtiers feed on 'em with my countenance; I cannot look into the city, but one or other makes tender of his good parts to me: either his language, his travel, his intelligence, or something. Gentlemen send me their younger sons, furnished in complete, to learn fashions forsooth; as if the riding of five hundred miles and spending a thousand crowns would make 'em wiser than God meant to make 'em. Others with child with the travelling humour, as if an ass for going to Paris would come home a courser of Naples.

Drama and Poetry.—If for Jonson and Chapman's sense of character we put passion, and for their humour poetic feeling, we have the more daring but less measurely and concentrated **Beaumont** (1586—1616) and **Fletcher** (1576—1625), the Dioscuri of the English drama. Of the three theories, that (1) which assigns to Beaumont the mere part of sketching out or amending the work of Fletcher, (2) that which ascribes to him the more inspired and powerful writing, and (3) that which makes the one the natural equal and fellow of the other, the last seems

the most probable. The fact that Beaumont was capable of doing fine literary work otherwise seems to discredit the first; the fact that Fletcher, in the plays which he wrote unassisted, was capable of work as brilliant and impassioned as any in the plays written in conjunction, disposes of the second. We may admit Beaumont's superior symmetry and rhetorical point, the point, for instance, of a passage like this,

> Thou royal ring-tail, fit to fly at nothing
> But poor men's poultry, and have every boy
> Beat thee from that too with his bread and butter!

as we admit Fletcher's superiority in poesy, the poesy of his splendid pastoral drama, *The Faithful Shepherdess*; but if, as is supposed, Beaumont had the greater share in the Tragicomedy, *Philaster*, and if, as is also supposed, Fletcher is wholly responsible for *Valentinian*, which appeared after Beaumont's death, there is hardly a point to choose between them in the faculty that in these plays is supreme, that of dramatic interest and emotion. To trace the injury done by the misapprehension of loving hearts, to give the utterance of feeling touched to the very quick, of sensitive, self-denying affection, of womanly resentment, womanish malignity, overmastering scorn, belongs to these dramatists alone.

Enter MEGRA.

King. Now, lady of honour, where's your honour now?
No man can fit your palate, but the prince.
Thou most ill-shrouded rottenness; thou piece
Made by a painter and a 'pothecary;
Thou troubled sea of lust; thou wilderness,
Inhabited by wild thoughts; thou swoll'n cloud
Of infection; thou ripe mine of all diseases;
Thou all sin, all hell, and last, all devils, tell me
Had you none to pull on with your courtesies,
But he that must be mine, and wrong my daughter?

By all the gods! all these, and all the pages,
And all the court, shall hoot thee through the court;
Fling rotten oranges, make ribald rhymes,
And sear thy name with candles upon walls.

In several plays Fletcher entered into collaboration with **Massinger** (1584—1639), whose *Duke of Milan* and *Great Duke of Florence* show him to belong to the same romantic school. He also resembles Fletcher in his diffuseness, unrelieved by the other's periodic intensity. His *New Way to pay Old Debts*, which still keeps the stage, owes its popularity to the figure of the greedy and unscrupulous Sir Giles Overreach, as that does its effectiveness to the fact of its being drawn from life. Suave, symmetrical, and sedate, an admirable playwright, and a conscientious workman, its author belongs to the school of accomplishment, not of inspiration. To relieve the polished monotony of treatment by momentary rhetorical artifice; to mask the want of energy by pliancy, and the want of depth by simplicity; to atone for want of brilliance by never being detected in effort; to admit no striking idiosyncrasies of character, and to obtrude no personal mannerisms; to be often conventional in reflection, figure, and stage expedient, yet preserve a certain subtle modulating skill of treatment, and keep on the right side of mediocrity—is the art of Massinger.

Poetry and Psychology.—**Dekker** belongs to the converse school, that of inspiration rather than accomplishment. Versatile, exuberant, and careless in detail, he has much of the imagination and vital force of Middleton, without Middleton's tragic depth, though with more fancy and perhaps more observation. *Old Fortunatus* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* are fine specimens of his powers in the opposite domains of romance and realistic comedy. The subjects which Jonson found in the middle classes, Fletcher and Massinger in the court,

and the camp, Dekker found chiefly in the lower, the 'prentices of the Shoemaker's Holiday, the country-folk and morris-dancers of the *Witch of Edmonton*; nor is his moral of justice and good feeling less earnest, though it may be more genial than Jonson's and less trite than Massinger's.

Psychology.—The play last named was the principal of those in which Dekker had the co-operation of **Ford** (1586--1639). Collaboration between authors more opposite in temperament must be rare, between authors of more congenial temperament it has been known to be less successful. To pass from the plays of Dekker to those of Ford is to pass from the light of day to that of a dark lantern; but the difference is not one of dissympathy. Though Ford has much less of the Celtic vivacity and brilliance than of the Celtic melancholy, his melancholy is always gentle, never cynical or gloomy. His field, as these titles indicate, *The Lover's Melancholy*, *Love's Sacrifice*, *The Broken Heart*, is that of sentimental psychology. It is not a wide field, nor is his treatment profound. Ford's art lacks felicity and energy, and therefore conclusiveness. The light which his dark lantern throws upon sexual affection does not penetrate any essential mystery of the human heart; its strength and truth are only relative by comparison with the obscurity beyond. The characters of Ford are studies, not finished portraits; his art that of the student, not of the master, of one who is a specialist without being an expert; and the fine historical play of *Perkin Warbeck*, with its real breadth of character and sympathetic treatment, makes us the more regret that the themes which attracted his chief interest were not those in which he made the most satisfactory display of his powers.

Drama.—The same criticism applies in his own de-

partment to **Webster**, whose *Appius and Virginia* bears to his *White Devil* and *Duchess of Malfi* the relation that "Perkin Warbeck" does to the other plays of Ford. Webster's psychologic touch prevents his plays from being purely sensational, his culture prevents them from being simply melodramatic. But there is always the bias to the darker side of tragedy, the morbid motive, the ghastly allusion; and he fails to support his most critical situations by character and emotion. In this last respect his plays are inferior to the *Revenger's Tragedy* of **Tourneur**, who, with higher dramatic constructiveness and concentration, carries Webster's motives and methods into still further exaggeration, ingenuity, and perversity, and the key to whose impersonations might be supplied in the language of Marston:

> To swagger, quarrel, swear, stamp, rave and chide,
> To stab in fume of blood, to keep loud coil,
> To bandy factions in domestic broil,
> To dare the act of sins, whose filth excels
> The blackest customs of blind infidels.

Rhetoric.—Above all things a master of phrase, **Marston** (*d.* 1634) excels in rendering those emotions that lend themselves to pointed expression; a satirist, in rendering reproach and scorn, not excluding self-scorn and self-reproach:

> Hark thee, I pray thee taint not thy sweet ear
> With that sot's gabble; by thy beauteous cheek,
> He is the flagging'st bulrush that e'er droopt
> With each slight mist of rain;

though not without the poetic mastery of musical concord:

> Let music sound,
> Beauty and youth run descant on love's ground.*

* The "ground" is the musical theme, the "descant" the variation upon it.

Poetry.—Marston is the masculine edition of Massinger, as **Shirley** (1594—1666) is the feminine of Fletcher; with whom and the voluminous **Thomas Heywood** the Romantic Drama comes to a conclusion. In these two dramatists, if we are to judge by *The Brothers* of Shirley and Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, there is a distribution of interest, of light and shade, a flexibility, rhythm, and spontaneity, not to be found in the more biassed, if more impressive, work of Webster and Ford.

> I am a gentleman,
> With as much sense of honour as the proudest
> Don that doth ride on's foot-cloth, and can drop
> Gold to the numerous minutes of his age;
> And let me not be lost for want of that
> Deserves not to be nam'd to fill the balance
> Against true honour—let me tell you, sir,
> Virtue and blood are weighed against themselves.

In Heywood, who had the sole or chief hand in over two hundred pieces, and seems to have lived in order to write plays, as well as written plays in order to live, we have still the Shaksperean quip and antithesis:

> It was not I, but rage, did this foul murder;
> Yet I, and not my rage, must answer it:

so that in these authors this dramatic era comes to no premature or unworthy end. That conclusion was inevitable, and had nothing to do with the so-called Puritan reaction. No Puritan encouragement could have resuscitated Shakspere or made "Samson Agonistes" an acting play. The drama rose, culminated in Shakspere, and, culminating, there was nothing for it but to decline, as Greek philosophy declined after Aristotle, and the Italian school of painting after its culmination in Tintoret.

SECOND PERIOD.

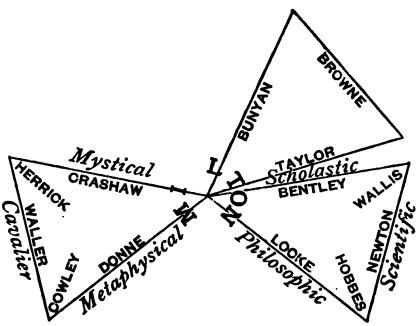
(1600—1900.)

THE SECOND PERIOD (1600—1900).

THE first three Ages of this Period, which politically is one of considerable disturbance, from the Civil Wars to those of Queen Anne, are distinguished by the fact (1) that literary men, such as Milton, Locke, Dryden, and Burke, took part either in the controversies of the time or the speculative discussions which arose out of them; (2) by the development of Satire, as in Pope and Junius, and of the lighter kind of prose and verse generally; while (3) it is beginning to find a powerful rival in Science, as in Newton and Young. In particular, the first Age, the Serious, is remarkable for its Rhetoric; the second, that of Gaiety, for its Prose-Comedy; the third for the Novel, of which we saw the beginnings during the Reformation era in Hall, Jonson, and Lyly respectively; while the fourth, that of our own century, combines, with the first and third of these, remarkable developments in Poesy and Science.

V.

THE SERIOUS AGE (1600—1700).



1. Poetry.

How very close in some points the connection is between this age and the preceding may be seen from the spirit of its verse, which is allied to the prose of Hall and Overbury, in the same way that the prose of Bunyan is allied to the pastoral and allegory of Spenser; more especially in the poets of the PENSIVE SCHOOL, and most especially in the first or Metaphysical section.

1. The *Satires* of **Donne** (1573—1631), who was the earliest of them all, show more than the spirit of coincidence; his character of a Bore, though worded less smoothly than the prose of the Epigrammatists, might have been drawn by Overbury himself.

> Under this pitch
> He would not fly. I chafed him. But as itch
> Scratched into smart—and as blunt iron ground
> Into an edge hurts worse—so I (fool !) found

> Crossing hurt me. To fit my sullenness,
> He to another key his style doth dress
> And asks: What news? I tell him of new plays;
> He takes my hands, and as a still which stays
> A semibreve 'twixt each drop, he (niggardly,
> As loath to enrich me so) tells many a lie—
> More than ten Hollinsheds or Halls or Stows—
> Of trivial household trash he knows. He knows
> When the queen frowned or smiled, and he knows what
> A subtle statesman may gather from that.
> He knows who loves; whom, and who by poison
> Hastes to an office's reversion.

The ruggedness of this, the cryptical allusion, the ingenuity of phrase and metaphor, recall to a modern the style of Browning. But if Donne's ingenuity led him sometimes into the coarseness of the Elizabethan dramatists, there is no question of his real subtlety; and if he exaggerates the worst faults of his school, its far-fetched allusion and elaborate conceit, he rivals it in its better qualities, its felicity, its sense of beauty, its tender and playful reflection.

> Hail, Bishop Valentine, whose day this is,
> All the air is thy diocese,
> And all the chirping choristers
> And other birds are thy parishioners.
> Thou marryest, every year,
> The lyric lark and the grave whispering dove,
> The sparrow that neglects his life for love,
> The household bird with his red stomacher.
> This day more cheerfully than ever shine,
> This day which might inflame thyself, old Valentine!

Many of those who, with the critics of the eighteenth century, admit or admire Donne's subtlety as a thinker, might dispute his delicacy as a writer. But what is true of him is true of the Pensive School generally, that its style has more in common with our own than a great deal of the poetry that lies between. It is not only an

improved criticism but an increased sense of personal affinity which accounts for the change in public opinion with respect to this remarkable but long neglected class of writers, even when that opinion differs from the one in which they were held by their contemporaries. Among those who have gained least in the appreciation of posterity is **Cowley** (1618—1667), who is more distinguished as a prose writer, and who in virtue of his *Davideis* and his *Anacreontics* may be said to stand midway between this section of the school and the Cavalier under **Waller** (1605—1687).

2. If the age had not been one of strange transitions, the age which converted Donne from a law student and a man of dissolute habits into a clergyman, and which turned Herrick adrift from the Church into society, it might have been worth while to dwell upon the paradoxes of Waller's career. A cavalier by birth, though a relative of Hampden and Cromwell, he served on both sides of the controversy, as occasion offered; entered Parliament at eighteen, and was a member of that assembly more or less till past eighty—a favourite with the House, though probably more respected by it on account of his wealth and accomplishments than his easy-going selfish character deserved. The one serious passion of his life was his fascination for Lady Dorothea Sidney: a hopeless one, but a genuine source of inspiration for his poetry, which is both fluent and copious.

> In vain I struggled with the yoke
> Of mighty love; that conquering look
> When next beheld like lightning strook
> My blasted soul and made me bow
> Lower than those I pitied now.
> So the tall stag upon the brink
> Of some smooth stream about to drink,
> Surveying there his armèd head
> With shame remembers that he fled

The scornèd dogs, resolves to try
The combat next; but if their cry
Invades again his trembling ear,
He straight resumes his wonted care,
Leaves the untasted spring behind,
And wing'd with fear outflies the wind.

In contrast to **Wither** (1588—1667), the Roundhead poet, who in these unsettled times passed a good deal of his life in prison, may be noted the names of the other Cavalier writers, **Carew** (1589—1639), **Suckling** (1609—1641), and **Lovelace** (1618—1658). Wither was a man of great animal spirits, and a writer of varied and sustained excellence. He is best known by his fine pastoral poem *Faire Virtue*, in praise of his mistress, and the remarkable lyric beginning

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flow'ry meads in May;
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be.

He has not the occasional boldness of Carew:

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note;

nor the occasional felicity of Suckling:

Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison.
Who sees them is undone.
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Cath'rine pear,
The side that's next the sun.
Her lips were red and one was thin
Compared to that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly;

nor the dainty feeling of Lovelace, a man of great beauty and fascination, a soldier like Suckling, a disappointed lover like Waller:

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field,
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore.
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

The writer who in virtue of his sprightliness unites the cavalier section of this school with the Mystical is **Herrick** (1591—1674). It is not a golden school of writers, nor is Herrick a golden writer, like Shakspere or Tennyson; but he is among the first of the silver school. He is seldom profound and never impassioned. His poems are short even where they are not lyrical, and slight in construction even when most solemn.

O years and age! farewell.
Behold I go
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost in the sea
Of vast eternity—

Where never moon shall sway
The stars; but she
And night shall be
Drowned in one endless day.

Herrick's art is limited, even in its finish. He is always elegant, but not always exquisite. And he is limited in subject. Love and melancholy are his prevailing themes, the anacreontic and the elegiac; and though it would be fair to few writers to speak of their imagination in the same breath with their fancy, it is only just to Herrick to say that his love poems are best where they are most fanciful, and his elegiac where they are most imaginative. The lines to his Dying Brother, his Mad Maid's Song, his Dirges, and his Address to his Winding-Sheet,

> Come thou, who art the wine and wit
> Of all I've writ;
> The grace, the glory, and the best
> Piece of the rest;
> Come then and be to my chaste side
> Both bed and bride,

are among the most striking poems in the literature, though it would be impossible even here to separate the imagination from the fancy. But it is precisely the charm of this graceful writer that he combines these qualities, as he combines lyric inspiration with meditation, devotional feeling with tenderness; giving to the death-sweat, the winding-sheet, and the grave the sweetness of affection, and to affection the symbolism and solemnity of religion.

3. The most akin to Herrick of the purely mystical or devotional poets is **Bishop King** (1592—1669). His *Surrender* is as chastely conceived as anything in the other's *Hesperides* or *Noble Numbers*.

Herbert (1593—1633), author of *The Temple* and *The Country Parson*, was himself a country parson, saved by his fine sympathy with human nature from being a recluse, and from being a mere mystic by his practical sense of duty. Like More, he married on

principle, but for a shrewder reason combined with his simplicity, viz., that though viewing the single life as the one most conducive to holiness, he considered a clergyman's marriage increased his influence with his parishioners. An observer in his quiet way of nature and men, and as watchful of himself as of others, he was equally apt in recording his observations. In his *Proverbs* we find such specimens as these :

> Pleasing ware is half sold.
> Love, and a cough cannot be hid.
> Old men go to death, death comes to young men.

And in the "Country Parson" he says,

> Because luxury is a very visible sin, the Parson is very careful to avoid all kinds thereof, but especially that of drinking; into which if he come he prostitutes himself both to shame and sin, and by having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness he disableth himself of authority to reprove them ; for *sins make all equal whom they find together*, and then they are worst who ought to be best.

It will be seen that with all his simplicity and self-lessness Herbert has none of the slovenliness which makes a man of such a temper uninteresting, as a child is less interesting with an unwashed face. On the contrary, his composition is if anything too formal in its grace, too studied in its reserve. But in its precision, its point, its condensation, it has all the character of beautiful writing.

> Oh what a thing is Man, how far from power,
> From settled peace and rest ;
> He is some twenty several men at least
> Each several hour.
>
> Now he will fight it out and to the wars,
> Now eat his bread in peace
> And snug in quiet; now he scorns increase,
> Now all day spares.

Lord, mend, or rather make us; one creation
Will not suffice our turn.
Except thou make us daily, we shall spurn
Our own salvation.

Morally as well as intellectually, these three writers, but especially the first and last, may be said to represent the peculiar character of the Pensive School, in so far as (1) its melancholy is never pessimistic; (2) its didactic vein is never sectarian or austere, nor the school generally of the gloomy dissenting Puritan type, but of the sensuous mystical Anglican type, the type of the High Church clergy like Donne, Cowley, Herrick, King, and Herbert; and (3) its mysticism does not tend to monasticism or asceticism. But as every school is represented by an extreme section, so these three writers are matched by three others, in each of whom one of these conditions is violated, and one of the tendencies in question exaggerated.

(1) Of **Quarles** (1592—1644), author of the *Divine Emblems*, it cannot be said that he is melancholy without being pessimistic:

So fair is man, that death, a parting blast,
Blasts his fair flower and makes him earth at last;
So wise is man, that if with death he strive,
His wisdom cannot teach him how to live;
So rich is man, that all his debts being paid,
His wealth's the winding-sheet wherein he's laid;
So young is man, that broke with care and sorrow,
He's old enough to-day to die to-morrow.
Why braggs't thou then, thou worm of five feet long?
Thou'rt neither fair, nor wise, nor rich, nor young.

(2) Nor of **Vaughan** (1621—1695) can it be said that his didactic vein was free from sectarianism. His *Sacred Poems* are more intensely devotional than those of any of his contemporaries, with the exception of Crashaw.

If (3) it cannot be said of **Crashaw** (1613—1650) that he is mystical without being monastic, his fault is the most venial of the three, as his poetic merit is the most transcendent. He fitly closes the interregnum between Shakspere and Milton that was inaugurated by Donne; for if the latter is its one poet who was converted from Romanism to Protestantism, Crashaw is its sole poet who left Protestantism for Romanism, and if Donne approached poetry from the side of the intellect, Crashaw approached it from the side of the emotions. The diverse tendencies of the School could not be better exemplified than in these two men, nor its essential identity. Crashaw's famous description of the miraculous turning of water into wine,

> The conscious water saw its God and blushed,

is a conceit entirely in the style of Donne; and those of our own century who fail to discover the link of admiration between Swinburne and Browning, may find a hint of it in the fact that the Donne who resembles Browning is of the same school as the Crashaw whose *Hymn to the Name of Jesus* more than foreshadows Shelley and Swinburne:

> Sweet name, in thy each syllable
> A thousand blest Arabias dwell:
> A thousand hills of frankincense;
> Mountains of myrrh and beds of spices
> And ten thousand Paradises. . . .
> Little, alas! thought they
> Who tore the fair breasts of thy friends
> Their fury but made way
> For thee, and served thee in thy glorious ends.
> What did their weapons but with wider pores
> Enlarge the flaming-breasted lovers,
> More freely to transpire
> That impatient fire
> The heart that hides thee hardly covers?

> What did their weapons but set wide the doors
> For thee? fair purple doors of love's devising;
> *The ruby windows which enriched the east*
> *Of thy so oft-repeated rising.*
> Each wound of theirs was thy new morning
> And re-enthroned thee in thy rosy nest,
> With blush of thine own blood thy day adorning.

The complex structure, the rush and rhythm, the alliteration, the visionary exaltation, recall the choruses of "Erechtheus" and "Atalanta in Calydon"; and to make the resemblance more complete, it may be added that, as Swinburne delights to invest his amorous subjects with religious mysticism, Crashaw is most successful in his religious subjects when he approaches them from the side of the amorous. Even in the prose of his preface we recognise the Swinburnian turbulence:

> It were profane but to mention here those underheaded poets, retainers to seven shares and a half; madrigal fellows, whose only business in verse is to rhyme a poor sixpenny soul, a suburb sinner, into hell. May such arrogant pretenders to poetry vanish with their prodigious issue of tumorous heats and flashes of their adulterate brains.

But at his best Crashaw is as rich, original, and impassioned as any poet of his time. His *Music's Duel*, the contest of the Singer and the Nightingale, is unique in literature. Those who cite it for comparison with Ford's have either decided in favour of the latter, or left the matter of superiority an open question; but there is hardly any comparison. Ford's slight sketch, graceful as it is, evades the very difficulties of the problem, viz., to render in words the intricacies of a bird's vocalisation. Nor is this either a factitious problem, or one whose solution depends merely on skill of execution. Crashaw is reproducing facts known to every trained vocalist, though they might escape the notice of less sensitive musicians like Mendelssohn; and the remark-

able feat of execution could not have been accomplished, had it not been preceded by a still more remarkable feat of observation.

To the Pensive School may be added **John Milton** (1608—1674), who, if he does not belong to it so exclusively as the others, occupies a position which from his variety of attainment in prose and verse was in that century—though it was the century of Dryden—unique. He was an admirable scholar; wrote admirably in Latin and Italian; contributed to History, to Ethics, and Theology; to his treatment of Politics in Church and State brought a controversial acuteness only second to his industry and power of rhetorical disquisition; and, in addition to his peculiar services to the Commonwealth, enjoys still the distinction of being the only English poet of note in a department—the epic—where it is of the rarest for any poet to appear at all. Attached not so much from habit as conviction to the Republican party, he was a man of aristocratic and upon occasion arbitrary temper; and an adherent more or less of the Puritan creed, he set no limits to his convictions or their expression, beyond those imposed by freedom of thought and freedom of speech.

His literary career divides obviously into three sections, a first and a final poetic period, connected by one of prose. (1) Born the son of a London scrivener, and educated at St. Paul's School, he proceeded to Cambridge; whence after five years of seclusion at his father's house in the country, during which he composed his *Nativity Hymn*, the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, *Comus* and *Lycidas*, he proceeded to the continent. (2) On his return he opened a private boarding-school in London, and at thirty-five married Mary Powell, of Royalist family in Oxfordshire; an incident which would have been immaterial but for the fact that the lady, who was

extremely young, and accustomed to a freedom she did not find in her husband's house, leaving him on a visit to her parents and for a while refusing to return, Milton began to issue his tracts on *Divorce*, contending not only that other reasons beside the gravest existed for that dispensation but—which was against the evidence —that this was the view of the New Testament. The events of 1649 gave a more serious turn to his activity. The Roundhead leaders having assumed the reins of government, and determined to use only the Latin tongue in diplomatic intercourse, Milton was appointed Latin Secretary of State. In this official capacity he thought it his duty to reply to the too famous "Eikon Basilike" under the title of *Eikonoklastes*; and later to publish his *Defense of the English People*, justifying the regicide and the commonwealth, in reply to the French scholar Salmasius, whom Charles II., then skulking on the continent, had hired to maintain his case before Europe. In argument, in wit, in knowledge of his subject, Salmasius was wholly inferior to Milton, and, except for political reasons, hardly worth notice. But it was the tendency of Milton's mind, and one specially encouraged by his combative temperament, to enter too closely into detail; with the result that his eyesight, already weakened by constant application from boyhood, was irrecoverably lost. (3) It was in this disabled condition, and enfeebled, though not dispirited, by controversy, that he planned and completed his last poetic works, the *Paradises*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

From the nature of the case the earlier poems have more spontaneity than the later; a finer rhythm, a more luxuriant imagery. No lovelier image, more exquisitely worded, is to be found than in his address to Melancholy,

Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,

But if Milton could not have written Comus at the date of his writing Samson Agonistes, so neither when he wrote the Nativity Hymn could he have written *Paradise Lost.* (1) The sensuous element has not disappeared—as witness the descriptive passages in *Paradise Regained*—but has become subordinated to the didactic. (2) The richness and mystery, or what may be called the Gothic element, in the minor poems, has been superseded by the classical, in treatment and literary form. Nothing is more remarkable in classicism than its absence of mystery; and no more remarkable instance of this is to be found than Paradise Lost, where what is most vague and shadowy in the Biblical narrative is translated into definite and concrete shape—the fallen archangels differentiated from each other with the precision of the Renaissance, and Satan turned into a figure as material as any of those that appear on the frescoes of Orcagna or Michael Angelo. (3) The lyrical element has been superseded not only by the epic but the dramatic. Unquestionably the dramatic character of a poem is never so liable to be overlooked as in an epic; but Samson Agonistes shows that Paradise Lost would have been dramatic if it could, and though Milton was defective in two essentials of the dramatist, the art of the playwright and the art of dramatic invention, he had undoubtedly the sense of dramatic situation. It is only from want of invention that we have not more passages like the stupendous one in the Second Book, where Satan meets Death, the offspring of himself and Sin; nor is there any situation in literature so dramatic as that, when Death attempting to bar Satan's passage into Hell, and a combat appearing imminent, Sin is obliged to interpose by declaring the connection between father and son, till that moment in ignorance of it and meeting for the first time.

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burn'd,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Level'd his deadly aim ; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend ; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds
With Heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air :
So frown'd the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown ; so match'd they stood.

2. Prose-Poets and Rhetoricians.

The prose style of Milton, who heads this list, is in general more rich and animated than that of his later poetry ; and being at its best where most impassioned, it is most impassioned when most argumentative.

From such an abyss of corruption no one, not even Cromwell himself, nor a whole nation of Brutuses, could deliver you if they would, or would deliver you if they could. For who would vindicate your right of unrestrained suffrage, merely that you might elect the creatures of your own faction? Should the management of the republic be entrusted to persons to whom no one would willingly entrust the management of his private concerns ; and the treasury of the state be left to the care of those who had lavished their own fortunes in an infamous prodigality? Are they fit to be legislators of a people, who themselves know not what law, what reason, what licit and illicit means ; who think that all power consists in outrage, all dignity in the parade of insolence?

From this we gather, what we should not have inferred from his poetry, that he was a master of antithesis. The

defect of his rhetoric is that it is circuitous. Its main drift is not easily apprehended, like Macaulay's; nor has he Macaulay's power of generalisation. And for this reason, and the fact that most of his subjects are not of permanent interest, his prose is undeservedly neglected.

1. **Bunyan's** *Pilgrim's Progress* has the distinction (1) that it is the only prose-poem in the language which deserves to rank with that of Malory; (2) that, as an allegory, it occupies in prose the unique position occupied in poetry by the Faerie Queene; (3) that, as a religious story, it occupies in prose the unique position occupied in poetry by Paradise Lost; and (4) that, as a work of general interest, it surpasses even the masterpieces of Swift and Defoe. To the symmetry and simplicity of the story, the subhumorous feeling, combined with a tacit appeal to a common standard of spiritual perception, the ingenuity of the execution, combined with the sense that the allegorical method is capable of indefinite extension beyond the book itself—which account for this result in popular appreciation—must be added the imaginative character of the treatment, *i.e.*, of human nature in a manner essentially sympathetic, and of circumstance in a manner essentially dramatic and significant. There was no reason in the world, apart from his observation of character, why Bunyan should make Obstinate the man to complain of Christian's obstinacy; nor any, apart from his instinct as a story-teller, why he should introduce the Obstinate and Pliable episode at all; nor, apart from his exquisite gift of symbolic design, why he should represent the Sepulchre as the receptacle of Christian's burden, or imagine the existence of the By-Way to Hell from the gate of Heaven. Bunyan's knowledge of human nature was more than experimental, it was introspective. And if a man who believed dancing and bell-ringing to be sinful pastimes could not be

expected to have a very healthy creed, or a man who was in prison twelve years for the complicated crime of not attending church and preaching in conventicles might have been excused for not having a very charitable one, there is no sign of either in the Pilgrim's Progress. It is the work of a man whose self is wider than his creed, and his art wider than himself.

2. Bunyan also wrote verse, like Cowley and Browne; though it is not in respect of his poetic faculty but his ingenious allusion that he is associated with these and other Rhetoricians of the age. According to De Quincey, who was the first to draw the distinction between Oratory and Rhetoric, as applied to this class of writers, they are rhetoricians and not orators. For while the orator is so possessed of his one idea, like a dog pursuing a hare, that he can admit no other, the rhetorician prefers those questions on which there is something to be said on both sides, and pursues his subject with indefinite digression, like a cat playing with a mouse. In this sense every man is a rhetorician who has a fluent style and a meditative cast of thought, especially if he is gifted with a quiet vein of humour and a poetic soul. Of **Cowley** as an Essayist we may have some idea from the titles of his papers, such as Obscurity, Solitude, and the Dangers of an Honest Man in much Company; but neither he nor **Temple** was so stately or so ingenious as **Browne** (1605—1682), author of the *Hydriotaphia* and *Religio Medici*. The first part of the latter relates to the Doctor's own creed, the second is an exposition of the nature of Charity, and of Charity in a peculiar form, as understood and practised by a man of the world.

It is an honourable object to see the reason of other men wear our liveries, and their borrowed understanding do homage to the bounty of ours. It is the cheapest way of beneficence, and like the natural charity of the sun illuminates another without obscuring

itself. To be reserved in this part of goodness is the sordidest piece of covetousness, and more contemptible than pecuniary avarice. I make not therefore my head a grave but a treasure of knowledge; I intend no monopoly but a community of learning. And in the midst of my endeavours there is but one thought dejects me, that my acquired parts must perish with myself, nor can be legacied among my honoured friends.

3. This is the classical age of English preaching, the age of **Andrews** and **Sanderson, Sherlock** and **Tillotson**, as well as the more eminent **Donne** and **Jeremy Taylor, Darrow** and **South**. And if it would be convenient to distinguish these as the orators and the others as the rhetoricians of the age, it would be equally convenient for their reputation as preachers; for wherever the object of speaking is to produce conviction, it is the orator who is wanted and not the rhetorician. But the distinction, if it turns at all, turns the other way. The Religio Medici is as much a sermon as any of Taylor's, and in Milton we have a higher note of earnestness and eloquence than in any of the divines. Nor is it the case that what they lose in practical is gained in literary effect. In the first place, Milton is never more brilliant than when he is most in earnest; and in the second, oratory is itself a species of literature, and must be judged by its own standard. The tropes that would be appropriate to poetry are out of place in a geometrical proof, from the literary point of view as well as the scientific; and literature is at one with practice in declaring that the elaborateness and effusiveness that would be appropriate to rhetoric are out of place in oratory. It is according to this standard, which puts aside as secondary the power to interest and impress, in comparison with the supreme power of personal appeal, that the English preachers are inferior to their contemporaries, the French. But, in the second place,

it should be observed that they share with their rivals the great merit of the masculine touch: they may be less clear or symmetrical, they may be dull or they may be diffuse, but they are never finical or self-conscious. And, in the third place, they have much more variety of individual gift.

Donne has more of the impressiveness of the French school than the other theologians. He was the most earnest man that ever ascended the English pulpit.

The ashes of an oak in the chimney are no epitaph of that oak to tell me how high or how large it was. It tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince whom thou couldst not, look upon, will trouble thine eye if the wind blew it thither. And when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of the churchyard unto the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church unto the churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, this is the patrician, the noble flour, and this the yeomanry, the plebeian bran?

Had **Taylor** (1613—1667) had more of Donne's wit to balance his luxuriant fancy, and more of argument to sustain his power of disquisition, he would have been much the ablest of his school. It is curious to find a man so gifted with the analogical faculty so defective in antithesis. But in describing an environment, in tracing a consequence, in pursuing a simile into its most remote and accidental connection, he is unrivalled among rhetoricians.

As when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns like those which decked the brows of Moses; and still while a man tells the story the sun gets

up higher, till he shews a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life.

It is also to be remarked that Taylor's skill in composition is inferior to its brilliance of description—his sense of form to his sense of colour. But it is to be remembered, in the first place, that he excels in force as well as beauty of description, and, in the second, that his power as a writer depends on the elevation of his thought as well as his mastery of the technical resources of the rhetorician.

This is precisely what cannot be said of **South** (1633—1716), whose earnestness, in contrast to the rest of his school, is less ethical than polemical; and the whole tone of whose utterances shows him to have been as arbitrary and intolerant as Taylor's sermon on the Liberty of Prophesying shows him to have been the reverse. South is the only one of these divines who was a politician, and the fact is in itself sufficient to lower his status as a teacher. But, in the second place, he was a politician of the reactionary school, who upheld those Acts against Dissenters which imprisoned Baxter and Bunyan; and according to the rule that the greatest mastery of invective, like that of Ruskin and Macaulay, has always been exercised in attacking, not in defending, the established order of things, the fact is sufficient to lower his status even as a rhetorician. But though South is not a Macaulay, either as a satirist or master of style, he is a concise and nervous writer; and he is on occasion capable of better things than satire:

First, take man's noblest faculty, the Understanding. It was then sublime, clear, aspiring, and, as it were, the soul's upper region, lofty and serene, free from the vapours and disturbances of the lower affections. It was the leading controlling faculty. All the

passions wore the colours of reason. It did not so much persuade as command. It was not Consul but Dictator. Discourse was then almost as quick as intuition. It was nimble in proposing, firm in concluding. It could sooner determine than now it can dispute. Like the sun, it had both light and agility: it knew *no rest but in motion, no point but in activity.*

The most intellectual of these preachers is **Barrow** (1630—1677). The predecessor of Newton at Cambridge, and the immediate link between Fermat and Leibnitz in the discovery of the Differential Calculus, he has a method in his discourses which we might expect from his scientific faculty, as well as a suggestiveness of thought and a knowledge of human nature that are very rare among mathematicians. Excelling his contemporaries in aptitude for Definition, he excels them also as may be seen in his sermons on Evil-speaking, in practical suggestion: and the most elaborate and painstaking in the preparation of his discourses, he is the most exhaustive in execution—it being told as a joke against him that having been obliged to stop one of his sermons after preaching more than two hours, he was requested to print it along with the other "half" which he had not time to deliver.

2. Miscellaneous Prose Writers.

Fuller (1608—1661) is the link between the Rhetoricians and the Historians and Scholars. The Characters of his *Holy and Profane States* differ from those of Hall and Overbury in being less picturesque but more didactic. That they do not yield to any in quaint felicity of metaphor, in pithy and sententious depth, or in common sense, is evident from the quotations.

A commonplace book contains many notions in garrison, whence the owner may draw out an army into the field on competent warning.

Learning is the greatest alms that can be given.

He [the good Schoolmaster] spoils not a good school to make thereof a bad college, therein to teach his scholars logic. For besides that logic may have an action against grammar for encroaching on her liberties, syllogisms are solecisms taught in the school, and oftentimes they are forced afterwards in the university to unlearn the fumbling skill they had before.

Those biographical sketches of his which go under the name of *The Worthies of England* do not profess to be critical or connected, or even (except incidentally) to deal with persons interesting from their character or eccentricity, since they relate merely to men of social or other mark, soldiers, sheriffs, ecclesiastics, etc., grouped according to their respective counties; but, being short and gossipy, are for that reason the forerunners of modern popular biography.

1. Of a more useful, more authentic, and more interesting type are the Biographies in which **Walton** (1593—1683), author of *The Complete Angler*, anticipates the "Lives" of Johnson, and the Diaries of **Evelyn** (1620—1706) and **Pepys** (1632—1703), the precursors of Boswell in tact of selection and minute and graphic description. This applies especially to Pepys, who was more inquisitive and personal, and whose tone and standard of criticism are as inferior to Evelyn's as he is in intellect and literary power.

It was a fine silken thing which I spied walking t'other day through Westminster Hall, that had as much ribbon about him as would have plundered six shops and set up twenty country pedlers. A frigate newly rigged kept not half such a clatter in a storm, as this puppet's streamers did when the wind was in his shrouds; the motion was wonderful to behold, and the well-chosen colours were red, orange, blue, and well-gummed satin, which argued a happy fancy; but so was our gallant overcharged, whether he did wear this garment, or as a porter bear it only, was not easily to be resolved.

The Historians of that day, **Clarendon** (1608—1674) and **Burnet** (1643—1715), professed to work on the same basis of personal knowledge, and wrote the one the *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, the other the *History of his own Time*, under the advantages and disadvantages, both as regards comprehensiveness and impartiality, of that method. If Hallam is not actually wrong in describing such works as Memoirs, he goes a little too far in styling Clarendon's delineation of character unrivalled; though portraiture is obviously his forte, even compared with so acute an observer as his Scottish rival.

Mr. Hampden was a man of much greater cunning, and, it may be, of the most discerning spirit, and of the greatest address and insinuation to bring anything to pass which he desired, of any man of that time, and who laid the design deepest. He was a gentleman of a good extraction, and a fair fortune; who, from a life of great pleasure and licence, had on a sudden retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness, and yet retained his usual cheerfulness and affability; which, together with the opinion of his wisdom and justice, and the courage he had shewed in opposing the ship-money, raised his reputation to a very great height, not only in Buckinghamshire, where he lived, but generally throughout the kingdom. He was not a man of many words, and rarely begun the discourse, or made the first entrance upon any business that was assumed; but a very weighty speaker, and after he had heard a full debate, and observed how the house was like to be inclined, took up the argument, and shortly, and clearly, and craftily so stated it, that he commonly conducted it to the conclusion he desired.

Bentley (1662—1742) stands almost alone in his class. What Shakspere has done for English drama, and Newton for English science, he has done for English scholarship. Though to modern criticism his method may appear of the old school, as Newton's does to mathematicians, that does not make him the less the prince of scholars. His *Horace* is the classic among

classics. To the ordinary equipment of the scholar, a profound acquaintance with philology, with history, with antiquities, with the environment as well as the text of his author, a ready memory and a critical judgment, he added a vigorous imagination and faculty of expression. His resource is proverbial; his chief defect that he was apt to exercise it on insufficient occasion. Contrary to the run of scholars, he could not work at half pressure; and the consequence is that, while real perplexities vanish under his touch, his treatment of very simple questions tends to perplexity and even paradox. To what extent his power of distortion could go, and of what triviality so comprehensive a mind was capable, may be seen in his edition of *Paradise Lost*, which, on the assumption that Milton's blindness was responsible for serious errors in the text, he proceeded to amend and reconstruct, much in the way that a policeman, jumping to the conclusion that a house has been entered by burglars, proceeds to measure off on the flower-beds the footprints that have just been made by himself. In the dispute as to the authenticity of the *Epistles of Phalaris* Bentley had the opportunity of showing his singular grasp of reasoning. His final answer to Boyle —the original disputant in maintaining the genuineness of the Letters, but whose rejoinder to Bentley's first refutation was mainly the work of **Bishop Atterbury**—is the most sustained piece of argument in the literature, as well as one of the most crushing pieces of satire. Both were warranted by "Boyle's" attack, which was able as well as impertinent. When "Boyle" says that Bentley must have been fast asleep when he wrote so wildly, Bentley answers that he had heard of a more remarkable paradox, viz., that not only the wild but the best of Mr. Boyle's book was written when he was fast asleep.

2. Among other scholars, besides **Temple**, who was the indirect occasion of the dispute, were **Wallis** and **Halley**, both skilled in the curious art of deciphering, but more distinguished in those sciences—the one in mathematics, the other in astronomy—of which **Newton** was the supreme exponent. He had not the skill of Wallis in composition, and his *Observations upon the Prophecies of Holy Writ* are not so much literary as scientific. For the difficulty that has been felt in understanding Newton's devotion to this line of study vanishes when we remember that the interpretation of the figures of prophecy offers—as it did to **Napier**—a series of problems similar to those of mathematics, and interesting enough to any one conversant with symbols; especially where, as in the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, the figures were of an astronomical character. It is not, however, from such professedly literary work that Newton takes his significance in literature, but from his scientific; *i.e.*, from the wealth of illustration created by his fundamental discovery, and the artistic skill which entitles the *Principia* to rank with the "Mécanique Analytique" of Lagrange and Hamilton's "Elements of Quaternions."

3. The remark in that work, that Time and Space are not substances but attributes of a Substance, gave rise to the famous *a priori* argument of **Clarke's** *Being and Attributes of God.*

Hobbes (1588—1679), the friend and secretary of Bacon, who stretches his long face and long body and long life from Elizabeth to the Restoration, was another thinker of the age who approached metaphysics from the side of mathematics. Not professedly a mathematician, he is remarkable for having based his philosophy on that science, as well as the mathematical clearness and elegance of his style.

It is a hard matter, and by many thought impossible, to distinguish exactly between sense and dreaming. For my part, when I consider that in dreams I do not often think of the same persons and objects that I do waking, nor remember so long a train of coherent thoughts in dreaming as at other times; and because waking I often observe the absurdity of dreams, but never dream of the absurdity of my waking thoughts, I am well satisfied that being awake I dream not, though when I dream I think myself awake.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* has by no means the breadth and conciseness of most of his scientific writings; it is needlessly minute and prolix. A necessitarian in creed, and one of the earliest thinkers to detect the significance of the Struggle for Existence among members of the same social organism, he could perceive no law in their behaviour but selfishness, and no corrective to it short of despotic authority.

In his *Treatise on Civil Government* **Locke** (1632—1704), the friend and correspondent of Bentley and Newton, and whose *Essay on the Human Understanding* has considerably influenced the course of modern speculation, took the more moderate view of what afterwards became the Whig School, and was all his life a strenuous upholder of the doctrine of civil and religious liberty. Laying more stress even than Hobbes on the fact that no impressions exist in the mind *anterior* to Sense, he insisted upon a *second* subsequent source of ideas in the mind's Reflection on its own operations; or, as it may be expressed:

> The first of questions being, Whence
> Our thoughts come to us for connection,
> Hobbes's reflection answered Sense;
> Locke had the sense to add Reflection.

He has less pretension to literary style than any other English philosopher:

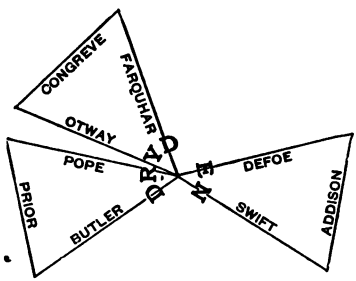
In the notice that our senses take of the constant vicissitude of things, we cannot but observe that several particular, both qualities

and substances, begin to exist; and that they receive this their existence from the due application and operation of some other being. From this observation we get our ideas of cause and effect. . . . Thus, finding that in that substance which we call wax, fluidity, which is a simple idea that was not in it before, is constantly produced by the application of a certain degree of heat; we call the simple idea of heat, in relation to fluidity in wax, the cause of it, and fluidity the effect.

The politics of **Harrington** (1611—1677) went as far beyond Locke as Locke went beyond Hobbes. His early stay in Venice had made him a republican; and he developed his views in the form of a romance called *Oceana*, in which landed property is made the basis of a commonwealth, and is so divided that no class of occupants can have undue predominance over the others.

VI.

THE AGE OF GAIETY (1650—1750).



THIS Age has its centre in the reign of Queen Anne, and is the middle one of three associated with the names of English Queens. It was an age when men were beginning to study not only men but manners, and the literary world for once found itself not only in but leading the fashion. Men and women were becoming gentlemen and ladies, and Congreve, the dramatist, told the astonished Voltaire, who came to call upon him, that he desired to be regarded not as a literary man but as a gentleman. It was essentially (1) an age of light literature, as became a polite society; (2) an age of satirical literature, as became a society which lived upon discussing its neighbours' foibles and took a profound interest in the quarrels of its footmen; and (3) an age of artificial literature, in which feeling had given place to sentiment, and thought to literary polish, when poetry became rhetoric, and prose stalked abroad

in the paraphernalia of verse, deriving from the unaccustomed aid of rhyme and metre the same moral support that a working-man does from being in his Sunday clothes. But though the literature was artificial, it was seldom slovenly; though often frivolous, it was never dull. The poetry might be prose, but the prose itself was never prosy. In other words, the literature had the points as well as the defects of a society literature, of an age whose interests, after the internecine struggles of the Commonwealth, had become social rather than political, though the tone of its controversy had not improved by becoming more personal.

1. Poetry.—The Pointed School.

1. In this light one of the most significant products of the age is **Butler's** (1612—1680) *Hudibras*. It is a poem on a political subject, but without political motive. Sir Samuel Luke, to whom Butler acted as secretary, and who unconsciously gave sittings for the portrait of Sir Hudibras, was a Parliamentarian. Butler's sympathies, such as they were, were Royalist. But the interest of the poem is obviously psychological. It is written from the point of view, not of the actor or the partisan, but of the spectator and artist; though, had Butler composed it of *malice prépense*, he would have found it hard to improve on the original. Sir Hudibras represents a real type, the combination of the casuist, the bigot, and the fanatic, who could

> distinguish and divide
> A hair 'twixt west and south-west side,
> On either which he would dispute,
> Confute, change hands, and still confute:

nor can this be said to be an exaggerated description of his Presbyterian crew;

Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun,
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire and sword and desolation
A godly thorough reformation;
Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to.

In any case Butler was too much of a humourist to be simply a satirist; and in both respects his work is superior to "Don Quixote," with which it suggests some obvious comparisons. He was not a catholic writer, despite the pungency and unconventionality of his work, and its continued novelty of expression and rhyme; he belongs to the class of artists who have only one vein, the class to which Cervantes belonged, to which Sterne would have belonged had he written only the "Sentimental Journey." And he is not a spontaneous writer. From the number of couplets he left behind it is evident that he wrote many of his verses separately, polished them with the care that a drill sergeant bestows upon each individual recruit, and worked them into his poem as they could be made to fit.

Dryden (1631—1700), the admirer and contemporary rival of Milton, had the special reason for political neutrality that he was Republican first and Royalist after; though he did not observe the same quiescence when he changed his religion. His earliest political poem was on the death of Cromwell, "his late Highness, Oliver"; the next year he published his congratulatory Ode to "his sacred Majesty," Charles II. This, with the *Annus Mirabilis*, commemorating the Dutch War, the Plague, and the Fire, of 1666, completes the first part of Dryden's career. The second produced the most and best of his Plays. Though these are little read now, and, like the majority of the works of British

dramatists, never acted, they formed an important source of his income and reputation, and constitute the greater part of his literary work. Among the most successful were the Comedies *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*, which with Nell Gwyn in one of the principal parts took the town by storm, and *The Spanish Friar*; in Tragedy *Don Sebastian* and *All for Love*. Dryden's taste in theatrical matters was not very high. His comic vein is apt to be coarse, his heroic Oriental and extravagant; it is only in his later plays that he discards the use of the rhyming couplet, which he defended in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*; and in his most dramatic passages he is obviously influenced by Shakspere. The third period, embracing the last twenty years of his life, is that of his Elegies, Translations, Satires, and Theological Poems. The political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, had the instant success promised by its personal allusion. Absalom was the Duke of Monmouth, Achitophel Lord Shaftesbury, David Charles II., and the rest of the *dramatis personae* were easily worked in from the text of Scripture; which thus, curiously enough, was made the basis of a third literary masterpiece of the century. *The Panther and the Hind*, written by Dryden when he became a Romanist, in the form of a discussion between Episcopacy and the Mother-Church on the merits of their respective creeds, may stand as a companion picture to his *Religio Laici*, written when he was a member of the Church of England.

These two pieces do not show Dryden at his best. Gifted as he was (1) with a remarkable power of rhetorical exposition, he shines less in set statement than in pieces of occasion; and keen as he is in satire, as witness his reply to Shadwell the dramatist under the name of *Mac-Flecknoe*,

> Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep,

he is even finer and bolder in the language of compliment. This is to Clarendon:

> In open prospect nothing bounds our eye
> Until the earth seems joined unto the sky:
> So in this hemisphere our utmost view
> Is only bounded by our King and you.
> Our sight is limited where you are joined,
> And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
> So well your virtues do with his agree,
> That, though your orbs of different greatness be,
> Yet both are for each other's use disposed,
> His to enclose and yours to be enclos'd. . . .
> Well may he then to you his cares impart,
> And share his burden where he shares his heart.
> In you his sleep still wakes; his pleasures find
> Their share of business in your labouring mind.
> So, when the weary sun his place resigns,
> He leaves his light and by reflection shines.

Of the Elegies, which are couched in a similar strain, that on the Countess of Abingdon, entitled *Eleonora*, is to be noted for the singular tenderness pervading its eulogy:

> As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue,
> Or, one dream passed, we slide into a new,
> So close they follow, such wild order keep,
> We think ourselves awake and are asleep;
> So softly death succeeded life in her,
> She did but dream of heaven, and she was there.

(2) Of his lyric power the well-known *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* may be taken as a specimen; and (3) of his dramatic, the following, from the play of "All for Love," founded on the story of Antony and Cleopatra:

> *Antony.* Urge not my shame—
> I lost a battle.
> *Ventidius.* So has Julius done.
> *Ant.* Thou favour'st me, and speak'st not half thou think'st;
> For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly;
> But Antony—
> *Ven.* Nay, stop not.

Ant. Antony—
Well, thou wilt have it,—like a coward fled,
Fled while his soldiers fought! fled first, Ventidius.
Thou long'st to curse me, and I give thee leave.
I know thou cam'st prepared to rail.
Ven. I did.
Ant. I'll help thee—I have been a man, Ventidius.
Ven. Yes, and a brave one; but—
Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have lost my reason, have disgraced
The name of soldier with inglorious ease;
In the full vintage of my flowing honours
Sat still, and saw it pressed by other hands.
Fortune came smiling to my youth and wooed it. . . .
I was so great, so happy, so beloved,
Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains,
And worked against my fortune, chid her from me,
And turned her loose; yet still she came again.
My careless days and my luxurious nights
At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,
Gone, gone, divorced for ever. Help me, soldier,
To curse this madman, this industrious fool,
Who laboured to be wretched.

Not generally a writer of great height or depth, Dryden is one of great breadth and force, a man of great originality and versatility, a critic as well as a poet, and master of the same easy masculine style in prose that he is in verse.

2. In the first of the two successful parodies which were published at Dryden's expense, the **Duke of Buckingham's** *Rehearsal*, ridiculing his heroic drama, Butler is supposed to have had a hand. The chief share in the other, *The Town and Country Mouse*, in imitation of "The Panther and the Hind," was borne by **Prior** (1664—1721), who had just taken his degree at Cambridge. Appointed secretary of embassy to The Hague and ambassador at Versailles, Prior owed his success in life to his wit and scholarship, which were

by no means of the highest order. He belongs to that class of literary men intermediate between the versifiers and the poets proper, as witness his rhyming poem *Solomon*; between the persifleurs and the wits proper, as witness his *Tales* and Songs.

Spare, generous victor, spare the slave,
Who did unequal war pursue;
That more than triumphs he might have
In being overcome by you!

In the dispute, whate'er I said,
My heart was by my tongue belied;
And in my looks you might have read
How much I argued on your side.

You, far from danger as from fear,
Might have sustained an open fight;
For seldom your opinions err,
Your eyes are always in the right.

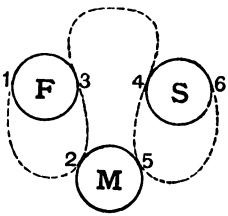
The same may be said of **Gay** (1688—1732), whose *Comedies* occupy a place corresponding to Prior's Tales, but whose verses have less point—if we except the occasional pre-Raphaelite touches in his descriptions of London life, as in that of the great frost of 1716:

When hoary Thames, with frosted osiers crowned,
Was three long moons in icy fetters bound.
The waterman, forlorn, along the shore,
Pensive reclines upon his useless oar:
Wheels o'er the hardened waters smoothly glide,
And raze with whitened tracks the slippery tide.

3. Gay's first success, like Prior's, was in parody. In 1709 appeared in Tonson's "Miscellany" two series of *Pastorals*, the one by **Philips**, praised by **Tickell**, himself a poet of considerable merit, as the finest in the language, but satirised with effect by Gay under the title of *The Shepherd's Week*; the other by **Pope** (1688—1744), who, nettled at the preference of Tickell, published a criticism

in the *Guardian*, where, under the guise of compliment, he clearly insinuated his rival's inferiority. No act could have been more characteristic of Pope, whose resentment was as easy to rouse as it was difficult to keep from finding expression. Where his interest was concerned, he had the unscrupulousness of a man whose self-respect is not equal to his self-esteem; and to his self-esteem as a man he added the vanity of an author, to the self-concentration of the artist that of a nature self-educated, precocious, and opinionative. As a youth he had no illusions. Where most poetical lads in their teens are bashful, and most precocious are forward, Pope, who was both poetical and precocious, was neither forward nor bashful. He was simply natural, plausible, and correct. If a nature so vivacious could never be old, one so circumspect could never have been young. To his precocity of talent, which enabled him at the age of twelve to produce his *Ode to Solitude*, he added that of the practical sagacity which enabled him to superintend his own education; was his own professor, examiner, and body for conferring degrees; and at a time when most youths are stupefying themselves with Greek roots and Euclid was entering the Parliament of Man-about-town, was mixing on equal terms with the leading wits of the age, and had composed verses which some of them would have been glad to acknowledge for their own. It was not an amiable world, nor a sincere one. But Pope had three qualities which enabled him to meet it upon even terms. He had as little imaginative sensibility as it is possible for a man to have and yet be a poet, little reverence, and little real earnestness. Instead of the first he had Fancy, instead of the second Satire, instead of the third the capacity for Moralising—the very combination to suit an age neither very broad, nor very high, nor very deep in its perceptions—and if we arrange these

as in the diagram, we have only to follow the curve from left to right to see in what order his faculty developed.



(1) To this stage of Fancy belong the *Pastorals* already mentioned, written at the age of sixteen. Whatever may have justified his grievance against Tickell, these typical poems deserve the satire of Gay quite as much as the Pastorals of Philips. There are four of them, conventionally dedicated to the four seasons, and filled with the usual polite allusions to nature and patronage of pastoral labour, the usual Delias and Strephons, and the other furniture of a land flowing with milk and Dresden china. It is essentially a lowland country, a land of fat pastures and double-distilled waters, where all the agricultural labourers are "swains," and the laborious pursuits of the shepherd are carried on by clockwork and to classical music.

> Blest swains, whose nymphs in every grace excel,
> Blest nymphs, whose swains those graces sing so well!

(2) In the same year that these poems were published, Pope composed his first work in the Moralising vein, his *Essay on Criticism.* This is a much more mature performance, always just and sometimes bold in thought, happy and often brilliant in expression.

> But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
> Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know?
> Unbiassed, or by favour, or by spite;
> Not dully prepossessed, nor blindly right

Though learned, well-bred ; and though well-bred sincere,
Modestly bold, and humanly severe :
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined ;
A knowledge both of books and human kind :
Generous converse ; a soul exempt from pride ;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?

In this style, assuming that diversity of taste does not imply the want of a true standard, he enumerates the characteristics of a good critic, and the causes which interfere with the impartial judgment of works of art. (3) His next effort, again in Fancy, is the famous *Rape of the Lock.* This poem, which turns on a practical joke, that of a nobleman cutting a curl from the neck of a lady, and with the same stroke of the scissors severing its guardian sprite, was too entirely to the taste of the eighteenth century to fail of enthusiastic approval, or to deserve all the reputation which eighteenth-century criticism would fain hand on to the nineteenth. To the really exquisite in fancy, the fancy of the "Talking Oak" and the "Midsummer Night's Dream," it has no claim. (4) His first piece in Satire is *The Dunciad,* a poem on dulness, in which be ridicules the minor poets of that day, such as **Hill** and **Theobald**, especially those against whom he conceived himself to have some cause of resentment, and for many of the personal hints of which he was indebted to the erratic **Savage.** (5) In his second stage of Moralising Pope produced his *Essay on Man* and *Moral Essays* ; which show him at his best—his brilliant rhetoric, his philosophic acumen, his knowledge of human nature.

True, some are open, and to all men known ;
Others so very close, they're hid from none. . . .
But these plain characters we rarely find ;
Though strong the bent, yet quick the turns of mind ;

Or puzzling contraries confound the whole;
Or affectations quite reverse the soul.
The dull, flat falsehood serves for policy;
And in the cunning, truth itself's a lie:
Unthought-of frailties cheat us in the wise;
The fool lies hid in inconsistencies.

(6) Of the *Satires* themselves this attack on Lord Hervey under the name of Sporus may serve as a specimen:

Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.

Dryden has nothing of the sneer and venom of this. If his instinct was not so feminine as Pope's, neither was it so fine. In force and concentration Pope is also somewhat superior, and the same is true of his versification. Nor must it be supposed that he owed any of his power to Dryden. He would have been the author of the "Essay on Man" had there been no Dryden, just as he would have been the author of the "Essay on Criticism" had there been no Boileau, or any of the French school, to whose performances in their chosen line his own are immeasurably superior.

Neither must he be judged according to the assumption that, because an author affects a literary form, viz., that of verse, with which the most exquisite poetry is associated, his performances lose in literary merit as they lose in poetical. It was Pope's misfortune (not his discredit) that, being a rhetorician rather than a poet proper, he brought at once more of one quality into his verse and less of another than the conditions of poesy required. His merit was that within these limits he reached so high a level of performance—limits not only of style but versification; for, on the other hand, to consider Pope's verse as perfect, is to forget that polish is not finish, nor the art of the jeweller and the burnisher that of the water-colour painter.

2. Drama.

The Tragedy and Comedy, which in the earlier part of the age were united in Dryden, are represented by **Lee** and **Etherege** respectively; themselves the precursors of **Otway** (1651—1685) and the Comic Dramatists so-called of the Restoration.

Otway's *Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* are among the classical tragedies of the literature, as his life is classical for misery and poverty among the lives of the dramatists. His range is narrow, both in character and treatment; his method almost monotonous in its interrogation and apostrophe, its appeal and protestation. His forte is domestic emotion—affection in all its excited stages, tender, exulting, despairing. When Jaffier in "Venice Preserved" asks Belvidera if poverty and exile will make no difference in her attachment, she answers:

> Oh! I will love, even in madness love thee!
> Though my distracted senses should forsake me,
> I'd find some intervals when my poor heart
> Should 'suage itself, and be let loose to thine.

Though the bare earth be all our resting-place,
Its roots our food, some cliff our habitation,
I'll make this arm a pillow for thine head ;
And, as thou sighing liest, and swelled with sorrow,
Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest.

In great contrast for the most part to Otway, in habits, connections, temper, style, and success, are the Comic Dramatists, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. They treated of the affections too, but it is an affection which is generally the reverse of domestic, the tone and subject of these plays being French, as French still is ; and **Wycherley** (1640—1715), who had been initiated into the ways of French society at a very early age, set an example in his *Love in a Wood* and *The Country Wife* that was soon followed. But in the first place it is to be remarked, in justice to the French Comedy, that Molière was then in possession of the stage, whose range of plot and situation far exceeded any that could be drawn from the mere *motif* of gallantry ; and in the next, on behalf of the English, that this motive, though the principal, is not the only one. Macaulay is evidently in error when he censures the dramatists for making the pursuit of gallantry the *sine quâ non* of a man of fashion. The breeding and fashion are introduced to give probability and interest to the plot ; and hence the dramatist represents his gallant as a man of fashion, not the man of fashion as necessarily a gallant. To this motive of intrigue is added, secondly, that of self-interest, which furnishes the secondary plot, and sometimes the principal one—the vulgar schoolgirl with her lands and stocks, and the wealthy widow, with the elderly rakes and penniless scapegraces after them in full cry, more especially if there is a father or elder brother, or other enemy of the species, to be out-

witted in the chase. If to this is added, thirdly, a strong infusion of the menial element, with a touch of genuine drollery and horseplay, rustics, constables, and the other incidental machinery of the farce, we have a fair recipe of the old English Comedy.

Its first defect is its want of feeling. There is little poetry in it, and little real love-making. The gallants make love for one reason, the fortune-hunters for another. In the second place, the characters are limited and conventional. But there is no question as to the brilliancy of the workmanship; and this applies to the whole school. It certainly would be difficult in any department of literature to find a constellation of authors with such strong affinities so well matched in power as the four who form the Cassiopeia's Chair of the English Drama. In a certain intellectuality and reserve, a certain sententious turn of epigram, **Congreve** (1670—1730) has the superiority.

Fainall. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mirabell. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults, nay like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied 'em and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes one day or other to hate her heartily; to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance; till in a few days it became habitual to me to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.—*The Way of the World* (*Act I., Scene* 3).

The heroine in question, Mistress Millamant, justly considered the finest of Congreve's creations, is the type of

fashionable elegance and assured fascination, and over all this author's treatment we feel the projection of his own courtly individuality. The touch of heart which we find in Dryden's Elegy on Lady Abingdon, we find also in Congreve's estimate of Dryden as an author and a man, and in his famous remark on Lady Elizabeth Hastings, "To *love* her is a liberal education." But in ease, in invention, in wit, in humour, the author of *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World* is inferior to **Vanbrugh** (1666—1726) and especially to **Farquhar** (1678—1707), the youngest of the school, the most brilliant, the most generous. Vanbrugh, author of *The Relapse* and *The Confederacy*, was of Flemish descent, and by profession an architect. Farquhar was an Irishman and a soldier. The most poverty-stricken and unhappy in his career, he has the highest spirits, the most contagious gaiety. His *Recruiting Officer* and *Beaux' Stratagem* are models of light comedy. In the scene from the latter where Archer, the pretended footman, is speaking to Mrs. Sullen, we observe the same breadth of social satire that is found in Sheridan:

My memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London. My lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I served, called me up one morning, and told me, Martin, go to my lady Allnight with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word with Mrs. Rebecca, that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of are stopped till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accomodate at the old place; but that in the meantime there is a person about her ladyship that from several hints and surmises was accessary at a certain time to the disappointments that naturally attend things, that to her knowledge are of more importance. . . . the whole howd'ye was about half an hour long; so I happened to misplace two syllables, and was turned off and rendered incapable.

3. Miscellaneous Prose.

This Comedy, as will be seen by the extracts, is essentially a prose comedy; and Dryden, who wrote for the stage both in prose and verse, is in this as in other respects the special connecting link between the Heroic and the Social drama. But at this moment, when the drama was adapting itself completely to the phases of ordinary society and the phraseology of common life, two new forms of literature appeared, which were destined ultimately to eclipse it, the one in the direction of sensational interest, the other of that periodic interest which it shared with the pulpit. The first of these was the secular Novel, the second the weekday Newspaper.

1. Both may be said to have originated in **Defoe** (1661—1731), whose talent for descriptive writing would have made him an admirable special reporter, had it not been overshadowed by his power of invention. Defoe is less observant than imaginative; but it is his special virtue that his imagination has all the keenness of observation. The impersonative faculty, which a dramatist or an actor brings to bear upon the representation of character, he brought in an unrivalled degree to bear upon incident; though it is his defect that he has not the same power over the former as over the latter. The *Journal of the Plague Year* and the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* alike show the verisimilitude of circumstantial touch revealed in *Robinson Crusoe*, with his incident of the canoe and its false keel, and his profound art of never being *too* elaborately circumstantial. On the other hand the irony of his political writings is apt to be clumsy and redundant:

> Once set the Pretender upon the throne, and let the funds be but happily stopped, and paid into his hands, that he may be in no more need of a Parliament, and all these distempers will be cured as

effectually as a fever is cured by cutting off the head, or a halter cures the bleeding at the nose.

A politician and economist of the Liberal school, the Cobbett of his day, Defoe had the double misfortune that his satire, considered as literature, is apt to be pointless, while its motive, as in his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, was sufficient to bring him to prison and the pillory. His greatest feat was the publishing of his bi-weekly Journal *The Review*, while he lay in Newgate; which seems to have been in part responsible for two things—in the first place the recommencement of systematic journalism by Steele, and as a consequence the finest literary essays of Addison.

2. **Steele** (1672—1729) entered the army as a private, and rose to the rank of captain; wrote *The Christian Hero*, then set to writing comedies, and being finally appointed Gazetteer to Prince George, conceived that with this access to a certain amount of early foreign intelligence he might be able to improve upon Defoe's scheme of a newspaper; the result being that in April 1709 appeared the first number of the *Tatler*, published at a penny, and issuing three times a week. After nine months politics put an end to the gazetteership; but Steele was the last man to remain a literary insolvent, and in three months he had founded the *Spectator*, the paper appearing now six times a week, and becoming more of a purely literary organ. To the Spectator succeeded the *Guardian*. But first and last this enterprise of Steele is noticeable for three things. (1) It was the beginning of the periodical essay; not the mere commentary on news, but the essay on men and manners, founded on so much of fact as made it plausible, informed with so much of reflection as made it coherent, and touched with so much of fancy as made it agreeable. (2) It was genial; humorous of course, but not

obtrusively so, and satirical, but gently and pleasantly, aiming rather at the affectations of society than its vices —in Steele's own words, to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning and vanity, and to recommend a general simplicity in dress, discourse, and behaviour. (3) It was enriched with the contributions of **Addison** (1672—1719). Steele's friendship with Addison is one of the few schoolboy intimacies that have lasted in after life, and in which the relative position of the parties has been preserved. To Steele Addison was always the elder brother, to be admired and teased, consulted and disobeyed. It was natural that in conducting a new literary enterprise, Steele, who perhaps knew his friend's latent capacity better than Addison himself, should ask for his assistance; and he was the first to acknowledge that, like a distressed prince who calls in a too powerful neighbour to his aid, he had been undone by his auxiliary; for what was most characteristic in the Spectator, its observation, its humour, its playfulness, its pathos, was contained in the papers of his friend.

Addison had already made his mark in literature with his poem on the Battle of Blenheim, *The Campaign*, which was so well received by the Whig party as to gain for him the post of Under-Secretary of State; and, as he held other political appointments, he is distinctively one of those English authors who, like Spenser, Bacon, and Milton, have an official state connection. He has the higher distinction, like Sidney, Noel, and Tennyson, of being an English author who is also an English gentleman. But he has not in literature the feeling which makes a fine poet, or the taste which makes a fine critic. His political poems, like his opera of *Rosamond*, his tragedy of *Cato*, and his *Vision of Mirza*, are academical and artificial. His

standard of criticism was not high, and it was not original; Dryden, whom he cordially admired, he praises chiefly for his translations, and Shakspere he seems hardly to have understood. But in his own walk, as a delicate observer and a graceful writer, he has never been surpassed.

I distinguish a man who is absent because he thinks of something else from one who is absent because he thinks of nothing at all. The latter is too innocent a creature to be taken notice of; but the distractions of the former may, I believe, be generally accounted for from one of these reasons:

Either their minds are wholly fixed on some particular science, which is often the case of mathematicians and other learned men; or are wholly taken up with some violent passion, such as anger, fear, or love, which ties the mind to some distant object; or, lastly, these distractions proceed from a certain vivacity and fickleness in a man's temper, which, while it raises up infinite numbers of ideas in the mind, is continually pushing it on, without allowing it to rest on any particular image. Nothing, therefore, is more unnatural than the thoughts and conceptions of such a man, which are seldom occasioned either by the company he is in or any of those objects which are placed before him. While you fancy he is admiring a beautiful woman, it is an even wager that he is solving a proposition in Euclid; and while you may imagine he is reading the *Paris Gazette*, it is far from being impossible that he is pulling down and rebuilding the front of his country house.

In this passage we have a fair specimen of the character of Addisonian prose, viz., a fine tact of observation seconded by a fine tact of expression. What makes it typical of the age, as distinct from the Baconian, is that the expression is more colloquial, the observation more concrete. Addison's style bears to Bacon's the same relation that Farquhar does to Shakspere; and as an instance of his treatment of character we have only to compare Bacon's Essay on "Empire" with Addison's portraits of Will Honeycomb, Sir Roger de Coverley, and the other members of the Spectator's Club, drawn

with a quiet ease and skill worthy of a contemporary of Romney and a countryman of Reynolds.

3. Had **Swift** (1667—1745) remained true to his early politics he would have completed this triumvirate of Whig writers. As it was, he became the Antony to the Lepidus and Octavius of Addison and Defoe. With the latter he had several strong points of affinity. (1) He was a political satirist, with a similar want of refinement and ingenuity. It cannot be said that his *Tale of a Tub*, with its Martin, Jack, and Peter, and its attempt to do for the Church of England in a satirical way, as against the Presbyterians and the Romanists, what Hooker had done in an argumentative, shows any very delicate irony. Nor has his *Battle of the Books*, written on the Phalaris controversy, the satirical point of Bentley's answer to Boyle; any more than his extravaganza, *A Modest Proposal for preventing the Poor in Ireland from becoming Burdensome*—viz., by killing the children for food—the subtlety of De Quincey's "Essay on Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts." (2) He had the same patriotic vein that we find in Defoe, as shown in *The Drapier's Letters*, where Swift, who was Irish by birth and adoption, interposed with effect against an English monopoly. (3) He was a realist, as his poetry, which was both lyrical and descriptive, testifies, and in which he carries the art to a pitch beyond Gay.

> Meanwhile the south, rising with dabbled wings,
> A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,
> That swilled more liquor than it could contain,
> And, like a drunkard, gives it up again.
> Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
> While the first drizzling shower is borne aslope;
> Such is that sprinkling, which some careless quean
> Flirts on you from her mop—but not so clean:

You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she, singing, still whirls on her mop.
Not yet the dust had shunned the unequal strife,
But aided by the wind, fought still for life,
And wafted with its foe by violent gust,
'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.
Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain
Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain!

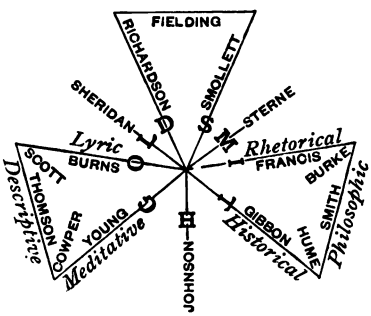
(4) He had remarkable power of invention. The ingenuity and irony, which should have belonged to his earlier satires, do in fact, though the first is still sometimes obvious and the second obscure, belong to *Gulliver's Travels.*

In the school of political projectors I was but ill entertained, the professors appearing in my judgment wholly out of their senses, which is a scene that never fails to make me melancholy. These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to choose favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; of teaching ministers to consult the public good; of rewarding merit, great abilities, and eminent services; of instructing princes to know their true interest, by placing it on the same foundation with that of their people; of choosing for employments persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible chimeras, that never entered before into the heart of man to conceive, and confirmed in me the old observation, that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth.

Where Swift differs from his rival is in the quality of his invention. Defoe's is the invention categorical, Swift's the invention hypothetical. The one excels in representing experiences that might have occurred to any one, the other in representing experiences, however paradoxical, in a manner consistent with his fundamental assumptions.

VII.

THE SENTENTIOUS AGE (1700—1800).



If this Age, the age of Young and Richardson, Gibbon and Johnson, is not all sententious, it is because of the gaiety which it inherits from the preceding, as in Sheridan and Fielding, and the *naïveté* in which it anticipates the present, as in Burns and Goldsmith. But even in Goldsmith and Fielding, writers especially spirited and brilliant, the mark of the sententious is at times unmistakable. *A fortiori* is the prose pompous, the poetry artificial, of a literature which at this period seems to have fallen into the condition which in man or woman we call middle life, and which is characterised by obtrusive common sense or sentimental self-complacency according to the temper of the individual.

1. Poets.—The Sententious School.

In its Verse these characteristics are more obvious

because more incongruous. Its mannerism assumes several well-known shapes. (1) The set formal:

> Say, why was man so eminently raised?

(2) The pseudo-scientific:

> What then is taste but these internal powers?

(3) The affected classical:

> O blest of heaven, *whom not* the languid songs . . .
> *Consenting* zephyr sighs; the weeping rill
> Joins in his plaint, melodious; *mute the groves.*

(4) The inane sentimental:

> Not a breeze
> Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
> The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
> From all the tenants of the warbling shade
> Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
> Fresh pleasure, unreproved;

for if this school is apt to hug the shallows of commonplace on the one hand, it is no less prone to shipwreck on the quicksands of affectation on the other.

1. It is, as might be presumed, the poets of the Meditative school that are chiefly responsible for these formalisms, truisms, solecisms, classical and other barbarisms. As regards **Young** (1684—1765) in particular, we see clearly that the school is one of decadence, that *The Universal Passion* and the *Night Thoughts*, so far from supplying the groundwork to the moralising of Wordsworth and Byron, are formed of the *débris* of Pope. The first of these works was the earlier written and contains a literary point—

> If man by feeding well commences great,
> Much more the worm, to whom that man is meat:
>
> Titles are marks of honest men and wise;
> The fool or knave that wears a title lies—

that was in part lost when the couplet was exchanged

for the blank verse of the more celebrated poem, though the latter has its share of memorable lines:

> Procrastination is the thief of time.
>
> 'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool.
>
> The spirit walks of every day deceased,
> And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns.

The more scholarly work of **Johnson**, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, written in the couplet form, also contains some of the single lines, such as

> To point a moral or adorn a tale;
>
> Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best,

which, if not monumental, like those of Pope, are at least memorial and as often quoted. **Akenside's** *Pleasures of Imagination* (1744) and **Beattie's** *Minstrel*, in the Spenserian stanza, are specimens of the more sentimental style. Akenside was shrewd enough to see, what better poets and critics have not seen, that science is no enemy to the Muse; but he had neither the art of metaphysical expression, in which Pope was unrivalled, nor spontaneous poetic feeling, and, standing midway between the two, represents exactly the transition from Young to Burns.

It was reserved for **Goldsmith**, in his *Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*, and in a less degree, by reason of his inferior subtlety and finish, for **Cowper** (1731—1800), to unite the wit of the Pointed School with the tenderness of the present century. In the *Table Talk* and *The Task* the literature of poetry is clearly on the reascent, its thought no longer formed on the model of Pope, and its naturalism the forerunner of Wordsworth. As in the case of Young, the epigrammatic resemblance to Pope is strong; but the epigram remained when Cowper abandoned the couplet for

blank verse, and it was accompanied by as sensitive an imagination and as keen a moral conviction:

> I mourn the pride
> And avarice that makes man a wolf to man;
> Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
> By which he speaks the language of his heart,
> And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
> He travels and expatiates; as the bee
> From flower to flower, so he from land to land. . . .
> He travels and I too. I tread his deck,
> Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
> Discover countries, with a kindred heart
> Suffer his woes and share in his escapes;
> While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
> Runs the great circuit and is still at home.

Where social philosophy ends, Pope's philosophy ends; where social philosophy inosculates with domestic is the field of Cowper. It is noticeable that his most important work should have been suggested by a female friend, and it may be observed as a first characteristic that his mind was essentially feminine both in its outspokenness and its reserve. In the second place, his humanism, love of simplicity, and love of nature were accompanied by a large share of introspection. And in the third, his meditative and didactic powers are more happily balanced and blended with the descriptive than in the case of any other poet between Shakspere and Wordsworth.

2. Among Descriptive poets proper, in an age when poetry, didactic or narrative, was largely descriptive, **Thomson** (1700—1748) occupies the first place. One of the least intellectual literary offspring of that Scottish borderland which has produced Ben Jonson, Carlyle, and Ruskin, he has the merit of genuine though not impassioned love of landscape, and of pure if not specially delicate or profound nature observation.

> Among the crooked lanes on every hedge
> The glowworm lights his gem ; and through the dark
> A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields
> The world to night ; not in her winter robe
> Of massy Stygian woof, but loose arrayed
> In mantle dun. *A faint erroneous ray,*
> *Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,*
> *Flings half an image on the straining eye ;*
> While wavering woods and villages and streams
> And rocks and mountain-tops, that long retained
> The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
> Uncertain if beheld.

Had either quality been finer, the other would have been finer, and with it the literary execution. To be effective, landscape painting must not be eked out with mere rhetorical description: it should present the cabinet-picture, not the panorama. And the same remark applies to **Dyer's** fine poem of *Grongar Hill*. What Thomson did in his *Seasons* was to rediscover the Georgic, and so to supersede once for all the Eclogue, or artificial pastoral of Pope ; only in so far as an air of formalism lingers over the whole performance, his landscape manner reminds us at times more of Wilson than Constable. His *Castle of Indolence*, in the Spenserian manner, has just missed being a really imaginative poem.

The introduction of the human subject, begun by Thomson, and carried out into individual portraiture in **Shenstone's** *Schoolmistress* and **Bloomfield's** *Farmer's Boy*, was completed for the time being in the descriptive narrative of **Crabbe** (1754—1832). His *Village*, *Parish Register*, and *Tales* in the rhyming couplet, rank next to Cowper in observation. Their human sympathy takes at once a homelier and a sterner range, that view of rustic life which is bounded by the duckpond, the dunghill, the workhouse, and the jail. The realism and the feeling of the poems are precisely what might be expected from one

who was a country doctor before he became a country parson, with the inevitable touch of the picturesque that marks the literary artist. And if it excites surprise that a field so rich in picturesque effect as that of rustic life should have been so long neglected since the days of Chaucer and Shakspere, and indeed cultivated by them chiefly for purposes of humour, it must be remembered that the same reproach applies to English painters. Both arts were beginning to turn simultaneously in the same direction, though the painters have perhaps technically the advantage of the poets. Crabbe is an inferior Hogarth at work on the subjects of Morland. In his own way **Rogers** (1763—1855), the author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, resembles Stothard, who with Turner illustrated his *Italy*—a singular partnership for Turner, whose mind was the very antithesis of Rogers'. The poet of culture and the patron of art, he represents the eclectic side of that career of the man of letters which **Southey** (1774—1843) illustrates on the encyclopædic. Southey was neither a weak poet nor an imitative, but he cannot be called either powerful or original; the fluency of his irregular verse does not disguise its looseness of structure, nor the facility of his invention the poverty of real imagination. The choice of subjects in his *Thalaba* and *Curse of Kehama* fixes the character of his poetic sympathies as essentially Oriental. The scene of the first poem is laid in Arabia; the second, whose principal character is a being endowed with superhuman wisdom, is founded on the Hindu mythology, and both poems have the same display of the vague and grandiose in sentiment and description:

> 'Twas a light that made
> Darkness itself appear
> A thing of comfort; and the sight, dismayed,
> Shrank inward from the molten atmosphere.

Their way was through the adamantine rock
Which girt the world of woe; on either side
Its massive walls arose, and overhead
Arched the long passage; onward as they ride
With stronger glare the light around them spread—
And lo! the regions dread—
The world of woe before them opening wide;
There rolls the fiery flood,
Girding the realms of Padalon around.
A sea of flame it seemed to be,
Sea without bound;
For neither mortal nor immortal sight
Could pierce across through that intensest light.

It was reserved for **Scott** (1771—1832) to unite the descriptive and narrative vein of Thomson and Southey with the lyrical of Burns and Moore. The conciseness, the energy, the air of natural as opposed to artificial romance, and of human as opposed to supernatural heroism, in *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, *The Lord of the Isles*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, show the advance in modern spirit and method compared with the narrative poems of Southey; and the fact itself was made unusually significant by the eager appreciation of the public. Like Scott, they preferred neither pure history nor pure romance, but the intermixture of both, and this, with the spirited character of the verse, despite its frequent crudity and carelessness, verging now on conventionality of phrase, now on bombast, makes him the representative of the Heroic school of English poets.

3. The Lyric school. In so far as the poetry of **Burns** (1759—1796) is disfigured by the use of classicisms, it is not only less modern than Scott's, but less representative of himself. His gift becomes stronger as it recedes from the side of culture and the sententious, and becomes simple, homely, and vernacular.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

It is the type of Scottish lowland poetry, as **Macpherson's** *Ossian* is of the Highland, the apex of the pyramid whose sides are Dunbar, Henryson, and **Fergusson**, and whose base is the common speech and feeling of the people. *Tam O'Shanter*, the lines *To Mary in Heaven*, and *The Cottar's Saturday Night* are specimens of the styles in which he resembles the poets in question, and of the manner in which he unites the Scottish individuality of treatment with the simplicity and directness of a vernacular poet. More sentimental if less frankly amorous, and more distinctively national in aim if less so in speech and character, **Moore** (1779—1852) is the corresponding representative of the Irish lyric poetry of the period. Besides his excursus into the field of Oriental literature in *Lalla Rookh*, we have specimens both of the Irish wit and melancholy, though neither of the first order, in his Satires and *Irish Songs:*

The *Ode* and general lyric vein find representatives in **Collins**, **Campbell**, and **Gray**, the quiet harmony in music, colour, and feeling of whose *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* have made it one of the minor classics in our poetical literature. The career of **Chatterton**, a vain, perverse, precocious boy, with a passion for poetry, for antiquities, and for writing by the light of the moon, is classical in the annals of literary suicide. The poems he left, which he pretended to have discovered among ancient manuscripts in the city of Bristol, are more remarkable as the work of a youth who died at seventeen, than for evidence of intrinsic power. The poetry of **Blake** (1757—1827), the forerunner of Morris and Rossetti, is most easily identified with the painting of

the age; for the dreaminess, the delicate fantasy, the irresponsibleness, are alike characteristic of the poet, the designer, and the man.

BARREN BLOSSOM.

I feared the fury of my wind
  Would blight all blossoms fair and true;
And my sun it shined and shined,
  And my wind it never blew.

But a blossom fair or true
  Was not found on any tree;
For all blossoms grew and grew
  Fruitless, false, though fair to see.

2. Dramatists and Novelists.

Dramatists.—The Drama of this period is upheld by the two Irishmen **Sheridan** (1751—1816) and **Goldsmith** (1728—1774), each with his two brilliant Comedies. Sheridan's talent was hereditary. The son of a theatrical manager in Dublin, he brought out his first play, *The Rivals*, at Covent Garden when only twenty-three years of age. In mere literary technique this is somewhat superior to *The School for Scandal*, produced two years later; but the blustering cowardice of Bob Acres and the verbal eccentricities of Mrs. Malaprop are no match for the refined comedy of the scandal-mongering coteries and the delicate character-drawing of Charles Surface and Lady Teazle. The last character in particular, a genuine dramatic creation, is probably the chief favourite in comedy with the play-going public, and there is no wonder that for some time after its production the piece was worth £100 more to the management for a single performance than the most popular plays of Shakspere.

Lady Teaz. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Pet. The fashion, indeed! What had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teaz. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Ay—there again—taste! Zounds, madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teaz. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! And after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow.

The social atmosphere of this play, at once so piquant and so defined, gives it its chief charm; while the love-making between Lady Teazle and Joseph Surface is handled with an ease and a delicacy that distinguishes it from all efforts in the same field of the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.

Only less keen in treatment, if more gentle in temper, are Goldsmith's Comedies, *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Good-Natured Man*. With a knowledge of mankind at once deeper and more extensive than Sheridan's, as his poem *The Traveller*, his Essays and Biographies, and especially his *Citizen of the World* testify, some constitutional defect, in which timidity bore a considerable share, alone prevented him from attaining the same social success or playing his part as man of the world. His mixture of acuteness and simplicity, of readiness and backwardness, make him one of the most paradoxical figures in a literature which has produced Swift and Ruskin, one of the most whimsical in an age which produced Sterne and Boswell, and one of the most picturesque in a society which knew Sir Joshua Reynolds and Doctor Johnson. If a man cannot be called selfish who gives his breakfast to a poor widow, neither can he be called unselfish, when time after time he turns up with the money that his friends have scraped together to send him to college spent on cards or some other insane freak of amusement. Goldsmith completed his

medical studies in Edinburgh and Leyden; and as his misfortunes had hitherto been chiefly of his own making, his experience of London was soon to teach him what they could be in the hands of others, of harsh employers and an unsympathetic public, in the harshest and most unsympathetic city in the world. An usher in a school, an apothecary's assistant, a physician with more patients than fees, and finally a bookseller's hack, it was in the latter position that he was introduced to and sought the assistance of Doctor Johnson. In his possession was a novel, which Johnson, having examined, sold to a bookseller for £60; and thus was introduced to the public *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Had its drawing of character been more profound or its incidents more ingenious, the book would have had less success. Its strength lay in the symmetry of the plot—a series of disasters in the Vicar's family, each more overwhelming than the other, leading to the successive restoration of his fortunes—and especially in the domestic colouring of the narrative, with a corresponding naturalness of style. Its pathos, its humour, its satire, were all alike simple.

> Our cousins even to the fortieth remove all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt among the number. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house I ever took care to lend him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them.

Goldsmith, no more than Addison, belongs to the powerful writers of the Literature, but he is a writer of very varied faculty and great dexterity, and his style is a model of tact, point, spirit, and sense.

Novelists.—An earlier, and, so far as firmness of handling is concerned, an abler master in the same field of domestic emotion, was **Richardson** (1689—1761). His purpose is expressly didactic: to turn the young from those arts which heat the imagination and throw romance over doubtful courses of conduct. *Pamela* is the story of a servant girl, who marries her master, after resisting his dishonourable proposals; *The History of Clarissa Harlowe* presents a similar picture of purity in the midst of seductive vice; and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* is meant to represent an ideal of chivalrous feeling, which, precisely because it was moral, is in absolute contrast to the tone of the Comedies, Wycherley's, Congreve's, and the rest, then in possession of the stage. That such behaviour as Pamela's and such reward of insulted innocence were possible, was quite a novelty to the world of fashionable readers; and ere it had recovered from the shock there came in the pathos and circumstantiality of the story to complete the victory. To these gifts of realism and feeling Richardson added a considerable share in the art of the story-teller. A master in literature as in painting is known by the freedom of his composition; and Richardson, though he is an old master, like Luini or Filippo Lippi, and though all his works suffer from the disadvantage of the epistolary form, *is* a master of narrative treatment. He was the first novelist to use, and, with the exception of Trollope, the only novelist who did systematically use, that variety of the Suspensive Plot where the main interest of the story is narrowed to a single issue purposely left open and fluctuating between two alternatives, as in the case of Pamela divided betwixt her hopes and fears, and Sir Charles Grandison betwixt the twin objects of his affectionate admiration.

Fielding (1707—1754) evades at once the restraints

of the didactic purpose and the epistolary form; and, adding to the narrative proper a draughtsmanship of character that is not found in Defoe, becomes the first true representative of the English novel. Dealing with character neither for the sake of emotion, like Richardson, nor for the sake of sensation, like Defoe, he selects his subjects simply for their human interest, and is the most catholic novelist up to the time of Scott. To compare him with Dickens and Thackeray is to realise the difference between the early art of a nation and its later; for it is one of the chief merits of these nineteenth-century novelists that they give to their characters refinement and nobility as well as interest, and are as much to be appreciated in Colonel Newcome and the Agnes of "David Copperfield" as in Becky Sharp and Mr. Micawber. Fielding's taste is the picturesque rather than the dignified, and as meanness is more picturesque than magnanimity, and low life than genteel, the ludicrous and the vulgar play a larger share in his novels than the sublime and beautiful. As if to emphasise the difference between what may be called the Sadduceeism of his own temperament and the Pharisaism of Richardson, his first novel, *Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, is a deliberate satire on Pamela. In this work Fielding, who till then had chiefly maintained himself by writing slight comic pieces for the stage, seems to have discovered his true power; and after an interval it was succeeded by his greatest novel, *The History of Tom Jones*, and *Amelia*. His appointment as a Middlesex magistrate gave him abundant opportunity of studying human nature in those byways of vice, sloth, cunning, and spite which a London lawyer has so much occasion to explore; but the experiences of a police court soon become too monotonous to be congenial, and Fielding appears to have been little if at all indebted to them for his conception of life

and character. The same elaborateness of structure, the same air of disquisition, are to be found in his style as in Richardson's, though joined to a more spirited treatment and a more conscious satire.

The captain no sooner perceived the passion of Miss Bridget, in which discovery he was very quick-sighted, than he faithfully returned it. The lady no more than her lover was remarkable for beauty. I would attempt to draw her picture, but that is done already by a more able master, Mr. Hogarth himself, to whom she sat many years ago, and hath been lately exhibited by that gentleman in his print of a winter's morning, of which she was no improper emblem, and may be seen walking (for walk she doth in the print) to Covent Garden church, with a starved footboy behind carrying her prayer-book.

The captain likewise very wisely preferred the more solid enjoyments he expected with this lady to the fleeting charms of person. He was one of those wise men who regard beauty in the other sex as a very worthless and superficial qualification ; or, to speak more truly, who rather choose to possess every convenience of life with an ugly woman, than a handsome one without any of those conveniences. And having a very good appetite, and but little nicety, he fancied he should play his part very well at the matrimonial banquet, without the sauce of beauty.

If Fielding has not inaptly been compared to Thackeray —and at times it would seem as if Thackeray had deliberately modelled his expression after the older novelist—it is with much less justice that **Smollett** (1727—1771) has been compared to Dickens. The author of *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* is not only the coarsest but the dullest and least inventive of the leading novelists of his age. Smollett was a Scotch surgeon, who had passed some time at sea, and his best characters, like Tom Bowling and Commodore Trunnion, are nautical. Some doubt has been expressed as to whether the nautical phraseology in which novelists of this school are prone to indulge, such as "Swab the spray from

your bowsprit, my good lad, and coil up your spirits," is not a purely literary invention; but the lower class of seafaring men are unquestionably given to this licence of metaphorical expression.

Sterne (1713—1768), with as little decency, has more wit and brilliancy of literary gift. A comparison of the death-bed of Le Fevre in *Tristram Shandy* with Smollett's death of Commodore Trunnion will show the difference between the two writers. Sterne's wit and humour at his best are more exquisite than any of the kind to be found in the other novels of the age. In the art of narrative he is deficient; and his chief literary defects, his self-consciousness, his trickiness, and his inconsecutiveness, are amazing. He descends to the most mechanical whimsicalities, to chapters of two lines long, and asterisks instead of paragraphs. He fills his paragraphs with postscripts, anticipations, postponements, and digressions. He is the prince of episodes, the king of fits and starts. Even in the detached sketches of continental travel, which he published under the name of *The Sentimental Journey*, his flightiness is found to need restraint. But it must be noticed, in the first place, that if he is no literary strategist in the handling of his material, he is a literary tactician, and in detail can be very pointed and consecutive. When Mr. Shandy made any of his dogmatic and paradoxical statements, his brother Toby, that mild retired officer, would answer it by whistling half a dozen bars of Lillibullero; and upon this form of refutation Sterne wittily observes:

> As not one of our logical writers has thought proper to give a name to it, I here take the liberty to do it myself, that, first, in order to prevent all confusion in disputes, it may stand as much distinguished for ever from every other species of argument, such as the Argument *ex Absurdo*, *a Fortiori*, or any other; and secondly, that it may be said by my children's children that their grandfather had invented a name and thrown it into the treasury of the logical

art for one of the most unanswerable arguments in the whole science, and if the end of disputation is more to silence than convince, they may add, one of the best too.

In the second place, the incoherence of Sterne's method does not interfere with the completeness of his character-drawing, as in Mr. Shandy, brother Toby, parson Yorick, and Corporal Trim; though his forte lay in drawing male character, as Richardson's did in female. He is essentially a psychologist, as his *Sermons*, quite apart from his novels, would testify. The fourteenth, on Self-Examination, may be referred to as a specimen of his doctrinal and practical capacity, and of a class of productions which, taking rank with those of Barrow, entitle the author to a distinguished place among the essayists or rhetoricians of the age.

3. Essayists.

Rhetoricians.—The more purely Rhetorical side of the literature of the age is represented by Politicians; for this is the classical era of English Parliamentary Oratory, the era of **Sheil** and **Grattan, Pitt** and **Fox, Burke** and **Sheridan,** as a century previous had been the classical era of English Preaching. The majority of these names is Irish, and the author who, as Irishman and politician, though not as orator or statesman, represents the more exclusively literary side of the controversies of the time is **Francis** (1740—1818), the pseudonymous and never self-confessed author of the "*Junius*" Letters in the *Public Advertiser*, which attacked the Grafton ministry under George III. What excited interest in these Letters at the time was the scurrilous tone of their assault upon the personal character of public men, and the mystery of their origin, heightened by the fact that no prosecution or other inquiry was instituted; what preserves

them to the literature is their brilliant style and venomous power of sarcasm:

> You have better proofs of your descent, my lord, than the register of marriage, or any troublesome inheritance of reputation. There are some hereditary strokes of character by which a family can be as clearly distinguished as by the blackest features of the human face. Charles I. lived and died a hypocrite; Charles II. was a hypocrite of another sort and should have died upon the same scaffold. At the distance of a century we see their different characters revived and blended in your Grace. Sullen and severe without religion, profligate without gaiety, you live like Charles II. without being an amiable companion; and, for aught I know, may die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr.

It naturally becomes a question how much of this acrimony was merely temperamental, and Francis appears to have been a man who would have vented his spleen at the expense of any government, however just or indulgent. This is an essential point of difference between him and **Burke** (1729—1797), who, with a remarkable command of invective, only used his powers in that direction for a personal purpose, as in his chastisement of the Duke of Bedford, under the title *Letter to a Noble Lord*, in answer to a public attack, and who would not if he could have written the Letters of Junius. He was of the best type of those many characters whom Ireland has sent into English public life, law into literature, and literature into politics, a man of high nature and public spirit as well as great industry and varied intellectual capacity. As is usual where an individual is at once a man of affairs, a thinker and a rhetorician, the world has exalted his rhetoric at the expense of his philosophic power, and his theoretic faculty at the expense of his practical. On the one hand we have those who praise his fancy to the exclusion of his understanding, on the other those who represent him as a prosy philosopher whose disquisitions were out

of place in a House of Commons that they only sent to sleep. The truth is that Burke's tropes and metaphors, though generally apt, are neither very ingenious nor original, and though a man of profoundly reflective faculty, he is deficient in the power of philosophic abstraction. In analogical capacity he is as inferior to Shakspere, as his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* shows him to have been inferior in analysis to Ruskin. Hence it is that he is remembered neither for any striking literary phrases, nor the discovery of any general principles. He is essentially a Publicist, a man, *i.e.*, who brings an imaginative sympathy to the realisation, and an elaborative faculty to the discussion, of political situations; and hence it is that his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770) and his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) are his representative works. The latter movement caused, as might have been expected, a breach in the English Whig party, in the same way that the Home-Rule agitation for Ireland has caused a breach in the Liberal party a century later, and Burke sided with the Constitutional or quasi-Tory party, as presumably Macaulay, though censuring Burke's Anti-Jacobinism, would have sided with the party of Union. Macaulay's political sympathies lay midway between those of Burke and Milton; and if Burke, among thinkers and prose writers, takes precedence of Macaulay as a politician, he also among politicians takes precedence of Milton as a thinker and prose writer, while excelling both in his unison of the gifts of the orator and the rhetorician:

> To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shewn a disposition to a system of this kind; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offence; looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and per-

suaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old, and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; and that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortunes of all states, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity, may be strong enough to complete your ruin.

Philosophers.—Macaulay has noticed, as a peculiarity of Burke's mental development, that the abstract and unimpassioned preceded the imaginative and rhetorical. In point of fact his Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful represented his connection with a subject in which he had only a secondary interest. And if the same cannot be said of **Reynolds's** *Discourses on Painting*, neither can it be said that the work, though acute and suggestive, at all rises, as a piece of theoretical or practical criticism, to the level of the technical power of the artist. Even yet the time has barely come for a great practitioner in any art to expound its theory in a manner commensurate with its possibilities or his own performances; and where Reynolds failed it was not for men of the mediocre sensibility and analytic power of **Kames**, **Blair**, and **Campbell** to hope to succeed, however satisfied the critics of this age might be with their own achievements, and however sincere in their appreciation of each other. **Hutcheson** (1694—1747) is a man of more original stamp, and the founder of modern Aesthetic Criticism. His *Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue* contains

a principle of the Beautiful, viz., that of Uniformity amid Variety, which seems to have escaped the notice not only of previous but subsequent investigators; while the ethical part of it is remarkable as being the first attempt, outside the field of mathematics and physics, to apply to any science the algebraic method introduced by Fermat and Descartes into geometry. His interpretation of negative quantities in morals, and of the transformations of his general formula, which may be stated thus,

$$\text{Good} = (\text{Benevolence} \pm \text{Selfishness})\ \text{Abilities}$$

is ingenious and suggestive.

Thus in Hutcheson the Ethics of the Age inosculate with its Aesthetics, as naturally as they do with its Metaphysics, under Edwards, Berkeley, Butler, and Reid. **Jonathan Edwards** (1703—1758) and **Berkeley** (1684—1753) occupy each a unique position as philosophers, the first in the field of pure metaphysics, and by reason of his attempt to reconcile explicitly, what other theologians were content to accept implicitly, the facts of human responsibility and the existence of evil with the doctrines of divine predestination and moral government; the second in that part of metaphysics which concerns the relation of Mind in general, and the mind of man in particular, to the external universe. Both had a certain ingenuity and keenness of logic: Berkeley's attack in *The Analyst* on the sophistical processes—he does not dispute the conclusions—of the new Calculus anticipates almost every objection that has been justly urged against that method, and gives the very explanation of its secret mechanism for which Carnot has received so much credit; while these aphorisms from *The Querist* (1735) will show in how many of its most important doctrines he has anticipated the Political Economy of Smith and Ruskin.

4. Whether the four elements, and man's labour therein, be not the true source of Wealth? 23. Whether money is to be considered as having an intrinsic value, or as being a measure or a pledge? 24. Whether the Price of things be not a compounded proportion, directly as the demand and reciprocally as the plenty? 71. Whether pictures and statues are not in fact so much treasure?

Like his countryman Hutcheson, Berkeley has thus a fair share of the Irish intuition; but when he forsakes science for metaphysics, he becomes not only the most Hibernian of philosophers but the most Hibernian of Irishmen. Of the many who may assent to the physiological explanation in his *New Theory of Vision* of the nature of our perceptions of Distance and Magnitude, few will admit the postulate of his *Principles of Human Knowledge* that matter itself has no existence apart from a perceiving mind, *i.e.*, that not-to-exist (for the observer) = not-to-exist at all. An admirably clear and consecutive thinker when he is in the right, his style is only less admirable when he is in the wrong, and gives him for literary form the first place among the philosophers of the time. **Butler's** theory of moral action, embracing a rational self-interest as well as a natural benevolence, under control of Conscience, is more satisfactory because more comprehensive than the selfish theory of Hobbes or the benevolence-theory of **Shaftesbury.** His *Analogy of Revealed Religion* is a work on the defensive side of theology rather than the aggressive, and is far from being polemical in manner. This moderatism of tone is characteristic of a century which spoke so politely of "taste" and "moral sentiments," which had as little enthusiasm as capacity of final analysis, and whose controversies on subjects that more than any other have evoked the passions of mankind are distinguished by that want of intensity which is as noticeable in Butler and Reid on the side of orthodoxy, as in the more heterodox Hume and Gibbon.

Besides the Common-Sense School of Philosophy founded by Reid, Scotland contributed to science the Ethics and Economics of **Adam Smith** (1723—1790). His *Wealth of Nations* has been more decisive in Political Economy than either Hutcheson's work in Art, Reid's in Philosophy, or his own *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in Ethics. The postulate of that theory, that sympathy is the basis of our moral sense, is one of the paradoxes which are as likely to be found in an age of moderatism as in one of fanaticism, the paradox of elevating a particular and secondary element in moral action to the rank of a primary and universal; for there are many courses of conduct in which the feeling of sympathy plays no part at all, or where, if it does, the feeling is so balanced between one set of individuals and another, as to supply no determining motive or sanction whatever. For one who was both a moralist and economist, Smith does not appear to have seriously considered the relation of these sciences to each other, and according to modern criticism he has failed in not sufficiently treating the second as a branch of the first. His services to Economics consist in disentangling the elements of a complex science, in showing the relation of Labour to Wealth and Wealth to Money, pointing out that, while the source of Wealth is Labour, Wealth is not convertible with Money, but consists in whatever ministers to material comfort; in demonstrating that the maximum of material prosperity is attained, as regards nations by unrestricted commercial intercourse, and as respects mankind generally by permitting each individual to work out what is of real benefit to himself; in suggesting how Labour may be utilised, exhibiting the interdependence of various forms of commerce, and supporting the whole with considerable wealth of concrete illustration.

Observe the accommodation of the most common artificer or day-labourer in a civilised and thriving country, and you will perceive that the number of people, of whose industry a part, though but a small part, has been employed in procuring him this accommodation, exceeds all computation. The woollen coat, for example, which covers the day-labourer, as coarse and rough as it may appear, is the produce of the joint labour of a great multitude of workmen. The shepherd, the sorter of the wool, the wool-comber or carder, the dyer, the scribbler, the spinner, the weaver, the fuller, the dresser, with many others, must all join their different arts in order to complete even this homely production. How many merchants and carriers, besides, must have been employed in transporting the materials from some of those workmen to others, who often live in a very distant part of the country! How much commerce and navigation in particular, how many ship-builders, sailors, sail-makers, rope-makers, must have been employed in order to bring together the different drugs made use of by the dyer, which often come from the remotest corners of the world!

An important remark as to literary style which applies equally to Montesquieu, and to English authors like Hume and Gibbon, may be made with regard to Smith. There are writers who, like Macaulay, are able in the conduct of discussions purely non-scientific to preserve an almost mathematical sequence and precision of statement; but within science itself, in proportion as the subject under discussion recedes from the mathematical and becomes concrete, the problems become more indeterminate, the processes more tentative, the conclusions more problematical; probability supersedes certainty, the cumulative the symmetrical, divergency of application and convergency of evidence the mode of direct and simple demonstration; and the tendency of the style is to reflect or exaggerate these incidental disadvantages, to be looser in its collocation of facts, to be less explicit in its premisses, its methods, and its conclusions, to allow its anatomy to be hidden under the very illustrations which secure its interest and the digressions which heighten

the impression of literary ease. An example of this style at its best is Darwin's "Origin of Species." It is essentially the style of the naturalist as opposed to the analyst; and Smith's "Wealth of Nations" challenges attention on the ground, first, that its method is an anticipation of the method of Darwin, and, secondly, that it is an example of the naturalistic treatment of a science which in the hands of modern economists, such as Ruskin, has been shown to be capable of a more analytic.

In **David Hume** (1711—1776), the friend of Smith by right of mental affinity as of personal intimacy, the various speculative tendencies of the age, its theories of art, morals, politics, economics, psychology, and metaphysics, find an exponent, some casually, others more elaborately, as in his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, and his *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. An eclectic thinker rather than a systematic, Hume has a wider range of interest and is more modern in his sympathies than any contemporary philosopher. A utilitarian in ethics, he is a metaphysician of the Empirical school. Hence his attack on Miracles, as improbable on the balance of evidence; his resolution of Personal Identity into a succession of memories or states of consciousness; and his inquiry into the nature of Causality or Necessary Connection, first with respect to the validity of our reasoning on such matters, and secondly with respect to the origin or definition of the ideas in question. The scientific definition of Cause had been given by Hobbes, and afterwards, though less clearly, by Locke, who, following Hobbes on this point, anticipates Hume in both points of his inquiry concerning Necessity, considering the same problems and giving the same solution, viz., that inductive reasoning has no warrant beyond probability, and that our idea of necessary connection originates empirically and in habit. With Locke, however, the question is treated not only in

a more general but a more incidental manner than by Hume, who, making it the subject of a special and more explicit analysis, succeeded in catching the eye of Kant; who in turn arguing (it may be presumed) that to derive the idea of necessary connection from habit was *ex hypothesi* to make experience rise beyond its own level, was led to assign to that idea an origin in the mind itself; and this conception, extended to other ideas in the same predicament, became the basis of the experience-transcending, or Transcendental Philosophy. Hence the significance of Hume's essay in modern speculation, and its evidence, especially when taken in connection with Smith's economical discoveries, of the nascent influence of Scottish thought and culture upon European. In his style, which is clear and easy, though careless, Hume resembles the prose of his French contemporaries; and, as is the case with Smith and Gibbon, his speculative opinions, if not influenced by are decidedly in sympathy with those of his rivals, Diderot and Voltaire.

Historians. — Hume's *History of England* under James I. and Charles I., though not always accurate or impartial, is both philosophic and picturesque in treatment, and occupies an honourable place between **Robertson's** *History of Scotland* under Queen Mary and James VI. and the classical work of **Gibbon** (1737—1794). The *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* bears the same relation to Hume's History, that Hume's Essays do to the philosophical Essays of Gibbon. Gibbon's method of treatment, his sense of the organic and evolutionary in history, as the record of differential growth and decay, were as superior to those of most previous historians as geology is to topography; and he was fortunate in a subject which, while generally favourable to this special talent, enabled him to bring to bear upon it so large an amount of converging

erudition, literary, military, ecclesiastical, legal, political, and constitutional. A philosophic historian, in the sense of one who has profound insight into human nature, or a profound grasp of principles in morals, art, and legislation, he is not; nor is he a comparative historian, illustrating a near period by a remote, and tracing analogies between complex political situations. His field, as De Quincey observed, is the scenical and impressive, that which appeals to the senses but especially to association and imagination. In this respect his voluntary conversion to the Church of Rome, though he afterwards returned to Protestantism and emerged finally as a Deist, is not without significance, as showing his constitutional sensitiveness to antiquity, to elaborate symbolism and warmth of colour. Of the dramatic in his composition Gibbon had very little; he writes as a spectator, not an actor, and among spectators as one viewing the performance from the dress-circle, not from the pit. Of the picturesque he had considerably more; but most of all he had a turn for the stately and magnificent. It is Almansor, the founder of Bagdad, who captivates his imagination and sets loose his rounded periods, Almansor who emulated the luxury of the Persian monarchs and left a fortune of thirty millions; it is the palace, gardens, and pavilions of the Third Abdalrahman near Cordova, his seraglio of six thousand persons and his fountain flowing with quicksilver; it is Timour and the Moguls extending their sovereignty over Asia from west to east, the rise and progress of the Mohammedan religion extending its triumphs from east to west, the decline and fall of the greatest military empire the world has ever seen. In his mode of handling historical facts, Gibbon resembles Montesquieu; his general style is peculiar to himself. Too monotonous to be brilliant, too artificial to be

artistic, too redundant in detail to be energetic, it is always animated, picturesque, and dignified:

His sons and grandsons, of whom Timour left six-and-thirty at his decease, were his first and most submissive subjects; and whenever they deviated from their duty, they were corrected, according to the laws of Zingis, with the bastonade, and afterwards restored to honour and command. Perhaps his heart was not devoid of the social virtues; perhaps he was not incapable of loving his friends and pardoning his enemies; but the rules of morality are founded on the public interest; and it may be sufficient to applaud the wisdom of a monarch for the liberality by which he is not impoverished, and for the justice by which he is strengthened and enriched. To maintain the harmony of authority and obedience, to chastise the proud, to protect the weak, to reward the deserving, to banish vice and idleness from his dominions, to secure the traveller and merchant, to restrain the depredations of the soldier, to cherish the labours of the husbandman, to encourage industry and learning, and, by an equal and moderate assessment, to increase the revenue without increasing the taxes, are indeed the duties of a prince; but, in the discharge of these duties, he finds an ample and immediate recompense.

The position of **Doctor Johnson** (1709—1784) as a historian resolves itself into the humbler one of a biographer. And his *Lives of the Poets* show even this position to have been of as humble a kind as the criticism with which the biography was supplemented. But if Johnson was less a biographer than the cause of biography in another, **Boswell's** *Life* makes clear the reason of that predominance in his literary circle which criticism would vainly seek in his Poetry, his allegorical tale of *Rasselas*, the Latinised style of his Essays in *The Rambler*, and his *Dictionary*. Logical definition, of the kind attempted in the last work, requires a very delicate instrument, and Johnson's, though ready, was rough. His strength lay in the sound reflection of his Essays, his high ethical sense, his keen observation, and his

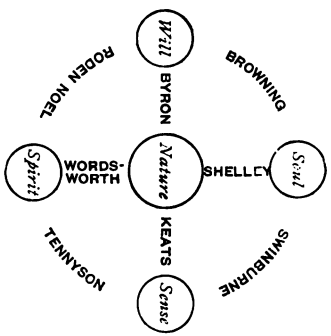
social sympathy, for despite his abstract style, no man was ever less of a closet philosopher:

> He that can only converse upon questions about which only a small part of mankind has knowledge sufficient to make them curious, must loose his days in unsocial silence, and live in the crowd of life without a companion. He that can only be useful on great occasions may die without exercising his abilities, and stand a helpless spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away happiness, and which nothing is required to remove but a little dexterity of conduct and readiness of expedients. No degree of knowledge attainable by man is able to set him above the want of hourly assistance, or to extinguish the desire of fond endearments and tender officiousness.

His innovations in diction stand on precisely the same footing with those introduced later by Wordsworth in the very opposite direction. Each was right in principle, each pushed his practice too far, and each lay under the imputation of having pushed it farther than he did. It is this same sententiousness and Latinity of style which makes Johnson, even more in prose than poetry, the typical writer of his age, and which would entitle him to rank as its most central figure, but for the superior range and brilliancy of Goldsmith. Posterity, which is interested in his eccentricities, forgives his prejudices, and respects his force of character; and Johnson's character was of a force that in the eyes of many gains rather than loses by prejudice and eccentricity, especially when joined to a common sense and a ready wit, qualities which more than any other in social intercourse enhance the impression of intellectual power. In these Goldsmith was for the most part deficient; and hence the contemporary verdict in Johnson's favour, a verdict now reversed in behalf of the more spiritual and therefore more intellectual and representative writer.

VIII.

THE SYMPATHETIC AGE (1800—1900).



1. Poetry of Nature and the Feelings.

In the Novel and in general Science we find the most remarkable literary advance of our Century, but the development of its Poetry is not less characteristic. In the first place there is a keener feeling for nature, in the second a keener emotional sensibility, in the third a more exquisite finish and sense of beauty. And if we divide the poets of the age into two groups, an earlier and a later—arranged in the figure on the radii and the circumference of the circle respectively—so as to begin with Byron and end with Tennyson, we shall have an exact measure of the advance in these respects from first to last.

FIRST GROUP.

Nature and Will.—**Byron** (1788—1824) himself had no high taste in poetry. His admiration was strong for Pope and the Pointed School, from whose dominion he, with others, was to free the literature, and chiefly on his part in virtue of that sense of action in which Pope was deficient. The man himself was essentially athletic, a powerful swimmer, a daring horseman, of a nature restless, reckless, imperious as the rush of his verse. In scenes of catastrophe and crisis he rises to his height as an artist, the siege, the battle, and the shipwreck—all that is eloquent of human conflict and mortal agony. If in the convulsions of nature he takes a similar delight, it is from a second instinct blending with the first, viz., his power of self-projection on things external. His self-consciousness was remarkable, in a man of his energy to the extent of being paradoxical. When his wife separated from him, and society proceeded to ostracise him from favour, he imagined that no such historic catastrophe had taken place since the expulsion of Cain or the fall of Lucifer. He *was* Cain and Lucifer; he scowled, he raved, he shook his fist, and had no idea that he was playing to the gallery; for his self-consciousness was not of that useful type which shows a man his performances in their true light, and with all his dramatic energy he had singularly little dramatic sense of character. Hence his ostracism from society reacted injuriously on his art by leading him to multiply varieties of a type of hero, of which one was quite enough. And this tendency was in that special instance aggravated by a third, viz., that power of contemplative brooding which counterbalances Byron's volcanic activity—the cloud that overhangs the crater—and which makes his art so symmetrical and complete. Byron's moralising (when he is not simply

quizzing) is peculiar to himself. Its subject is not any of the commonplaces of the pulpit or the stage; it is the decay of historical prestige and prosperity amid scenes of lofty historical interest. The three peninsulas of Southern Europe, so rich in association and tradition, were precisely the countries where all popular security, and, what to Byron was worse, all national honour, lay under the reality of foreign despotism; and the decay of national feeling, the debility of national character, is the burden of that moral which he inculcates with the same persistency with which he had described his outlawed self in the guise of Lara and Cain.

> What can he tell who treads thy shore?
> No legend of thine olden time,
> No theme on which the muse might soar,
> High as thine own in days of yore,
> When man was worthy of thy clime.
> The hearts within thy valleys bred,
> The fiery souls that might have led
> Thy sons to deeds sublime,
> Now crawl from cradle to the grave,
> Slaves—nay, the bondsmen of a slave,
> And callous, save to crime.

Nature and Soul.—Like Byron, **Shelley** (1792—1822), who was his close friend and admirer, admired and loved Italy; like Byron, he had dreams of a Republic of Man founded in another hemisphere; like Byron, he was an exile and an outlaw from English society, and, had he had the literary renown of Byron, would, by reason of his free-thinking tendencies, have been equally a mark for popular aversion. Precocity of any kind is no good augury for intellectual success; and when it takes the shape of writing pamphlets to reform the universe at the age of seventeen, it needs the countenance and support of precisely such a career as Shelley's. He has himself made the exception in his own favour, and created

the precedent by which he is to be judged. Wayward, dreamy, and ardent, his temperament is typically the most artistic of nineteenth-century poets. Like Byron, he has his sense of passionate activity, but it is the action of the soul and the passion for liberty; the delight, not in an energy that has ceased to be a law to itself, but in one which will not be dominated from without, which is beneficent in its wrath, and self-less in the exultance of its strength. Hence while Byron celebrates the lightning and the tempest, Shelley sings of the Rain-Cloud and the Skylark. As little of an ascetic or a pedant as Byron, he is free from Byron's morbidness, and his verse, if less strenuous, is more buoyant. To complete the parallel, it may be added, in the second place, that though Shelley, as in *Alastor* and *Prometheus Unbound*, has his own share of individualism, it is without Byron's egotism and bitterness, it is more contemplative; while, in the third place, his contemplative vein, as in the *Epipsychidion*, *The Sensitive Plant*, and *Adonais*, is more diffused and descriptive.

Nature and Sense.—Not more marked are Shelley's affinities with Byron on the one side, than on the other with **Keats** (1795—1827), the English poet who died at twenty-six, leaving such masterpieces as *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, and *St. Agnes' Eve.* Keats was not of a strong physical constitution nor of strong moral fibre; but he was a poet of originality and great sensibility. That he had already outgrown the slight literary affectations of his first production is evident. That with time he would have developed into a poet of masculine power his "Hyperion" makes extremely probable. That in the pure feeling for sensuous beauty he surpassed all his predecessors with the exception of Spenser, Shakspere, and Milton, is certain, and with him this sense was more immanent and constant. Greek undoubtedly it was, but

by sympathy, not imitation, for Keats, the son of an English stableman, was born a Greek poet, as Carlyle, the son of a Scotch mason, was born a Hebrew prophet; and to the Greek sense of form and pensive feeling of restraint, he added the Italian luxury of colour which is found in his *Ode to the Nightingale.* If in this pensiveness we trace nothing of the daring and passionate vitality of Shelley's "Ode to the Skylark," it is because the one *was* a skylark and the other a nightingale, Shelley the poet of the open air and the dawn, Keats of the bower and the moonlight.

Nature and Spirit.—In **Coleridge** this sensuousness is mingled with a vein of mysticism, and with a reflectiveness that makes him akin to **Wordsworth** (1770—1850). Wordsworth was not only, like Southey and De Quincey, a resident in, but a native of the English Lake District, whose scenery inspired and coloured so much of his poetry, and in many features of mind and character he was a typical native. Ardent as was his love of nature, his quiet and deliberate description of it partakes of the character of his own definition of poetry in general, as "emotion recollected in tranquillity," and though he is less minute and formal than Thomson, he has not the freedom, felicity, and casual touch of Tennyson. What lifts him entirely out of the range of mere observers of nature, like Thomson, and even of those who like Byron and Shelley penetrated into Nature's Soul, is his rendering of Nature's Spirit:

> A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns;

and it is with the interpretation of this Spirit in the mind of man and the subjective side of Nature generally that the second and more significant part of his work in

poetry is concerned. As no poet knows better how to blend the physical with the spiritual, so none knows better how to blend the physical with the psychological, as in his exquisite description of the Highland Girl:

> Never saw I mien nor face
> In which more plainly I could trace
> Benignity and homebred sense
> Ripening in perfect innocence;

and no one knows so well how to blend the psychological with the spiritual, as in his magnificent *Ode to Duty*. It is this which gives such sublimity and significance to his treatment of Man—man in his supreme helplessness before the eternal forces of nature, his blind gropings after the ideal world, his innocence of daily toil, his native independence, and his simplicity. Hence his sympathy with Childhood, as the fount of all the purest association, the link of all high thought, all holy feeling, from age to age—

> Mighty prophet, seer blest!
> On whom those truths do rest,
> Which we are toiling all our lives to find.

And if Wordsworth's treatment of child-life is too metaphysical, as his style is at times crude in its simplicity, and his treatment in passages of *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* somewhat prolix and monotonous, it is in such pieces as these and his *Ode on Immortality* that his power is seen at its most comprehensive, because involving his interpretation at once of Nature, Man, and Spirit.

Second Group.

Nature, Spirit, and Will.—Less intuitive and profound, less individual in conception and firm in handling,

Roden Noel unites a similar contemplative observation of nature and man, with a Byronic sense of stress and energy, a more realistic sympathy with human misery and necessity than we find even in **Elizabeth Browning**, and a special instinct for the more technical problems of philosophy. If his drawing of nature is less finished than that of some of his contemporaries and predecessors, he surpasses them in his sense of nature's multitudinous phases, and his descriptions of the desert and the ocean; a traveller in Syria, in Egypt, he excels in passages of tropical luxuriance and grandeur. Most original where he combines this feeling for nature with the element of sensuous beauty, as in *Ganymede* and *The Waternymph and the Boy*, he is most impressive where it is combined with the metaphysical, as in *Palingenesis* and *A Vision of the Desert*, or the ethical, as in *The Red Flag* and his most important poem, *A Modern Faust*. In pathos and satire he shows himself a powerful exponent of social philanthropy; while in the literature of subjective emotion and of personal and domestic affection, the poems, notably *A Little Child's Monument*, are unusually rich.

Nature, Will, and Soul.—A similar criticism applies to the lyric vein of **Robert Browning**, in spite of such a song as *A Woman's Last Word*; and generally it may be remarked, that though we have fine examples of spontaneity and transparency, both in his dramatic and descriptive work, as for instance the *Dramatic Idylls* and *Childe Roland*—one of those Tone-poems, like Swinburne's "Garden of Proserpine" and Tennyson's "Lotos-Eaters," in which a single feeling is wrought out in a variety of highly significant harmonic phases—pieces of this character are in a minority. Unlike Tennyson, Browning has his forte neither in intuition, nor in exquisite finish, but in discursive treatment and

literary by-play of allusion; with the result that to the general student the impression of the whole is apt to be lost in the apprehension of the part, the commentary to overlay the text, the method of presentation to be felt rather than the theme presented, and analogies and allusions, which were really struck out in the heat of imagination by the poet, to lose their significance when interpreted in the light (without heat) which is the normal medium of the reader. Browning's inspiration carried him into problems of which in cold blood he could not always supply the solution; and English literature more than any other has shown how it is possible to be profound without being obscure, and forcible without being abrupt. But Browning's intricate music and eccentric counterpoint may be admitted, without prejudice to the fact that he can be deep in spite of his obscurity, and forcible in spite of his abruptness. His instinct for particularisation, which accounts for these digressions and cryptical allusions, is one of the main secrets of his power for those who prefer the curious in episode, the recondite in history, the abnormal in human nature. Short of the coarse and repulsive, Browning finds nothing uninteresting that is sufficiently remote from the present age, from English habits and social conventions. He delights in the technical and professional, obscure musicians and grammarians, monks, cardinals, gipsies, heretics, early Christians, the whole swarm of mediaeval life in Italy and Germany, its science and superstition, faith and corruption, self-sacrifice and vindictiveness, simplicity and perverse ingenuity; and his most important poem, *The Ring and the Book*, is a long tale of murder told by various speakers. Hence the picturesqueness and variety of that psychological treatment in which he is unrivalled among poets.

Nature, Soul, and Sense.—**Algernon Charles Swinburne** is the chief representative of that Morbid School which counts among other names those of **William Morris** and **Dante Rossetti**, important on its own account, and also by reason of its association with the most powerful school of contemporary painters. Its mediaevalism, less catholic than Browning's, is pure Italian. Idealist and subjective, it is at once sensuous in treatment and puristic in form. In Swinburne, who far surpasses the rest of his school in variety of metrical effect, the art of sustained rhythm and of a certain mingling of music and colour in the verse is carried to a pitch beyond that of any other poet:

For a day and a night Love sang to us, played with us,
Folded us round from the dark and the light;
And our hearts were fulfilled of the music he made with us,
Made with our hearts and our lips while he stayed with us,
Stayed in mid passage his pinions from flight
For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest and his feet will not stay for us:
Morning is here in the joy of its might;
With his breath has he sweetened a night and a day for us;
Now let him pass, and the myrtles make way for us;
Love can but last in us here at his height
For a day and a night.

If the mannerism of his verse, like that of his prose, is more pronounced—his expression more turgid, his alliteration more obtrusive—his style is also the richest in modern poetic literature. This complex diction, combined with a want of complexity in the conception of character and the treatment of situation, prevents him taking the first place as a dramatist, in spite of the general power of *Bothwell* and *Marino Faliero*. But his *Tristram of Lyonesse*, as a specimen of the Dramatic Idyll, takes the highest rank, and in the rendering of

certain phases of emotion he is unrivalled. He is *par excellence* the poet of sensuous passion, in its moods of fruition, but especially of satiety; the poet of the wasted vigil and the forsaken garden, of premature knowledge and youthful illusion—the moods made so familiar by his *Poems and Ballads*, the *Hesperia*, *Dolores*, and *Garden of Proserpine*—and the poet of enthusiasm, now mingled with pathos, as in his elegy on Baudelaire, now with scorn, as in his odes of Revolution; nor amid so much that is characteristic should the solemnity and cosmic feeling be forgotten of *Hertha* and *The Last Oracle.*

Nature, Sense, and Spirit.—With a wider range, **Alfred Tennyson** stands more in central relation to the poetry of his contemporaries, English and American. Identified for half a century with some of the richest and most exquisite developments of the national poetry, the poetic writer next to Shakspere the most quoted and the most quotable, he has lent a new charm of individuality to almost every variety of poetic form, the lyric (*Home they brought her warrior dead*), the descriptive poem (*The Lotos-Eaters*), the meditative (*In Memoriam*), the idyll (*The Princess* and *Idylls of the King*), the monodrama (*Maud*), the monologue (*Rizpah* and *Northern Cobbler*), and has invested every such new form with the power of a singularly penetrative imagination and the grace of a singularly perfect style. To this gift of a style the most sympathetic in the range of poetic literature, he unites the most spiritual feeling. In detail he is most remarkable for (1) his idyllic pensiveness, seen at its best in "In Memoriam," a poem unique not only for its expression of pensive regret, but for the manner in which landscape is associated with the prevailing emotion, and the melody of the versification, of which three qualities inseparably united the 101st canto is an exquisite specimen:

Unwatched the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unlov'd that beech will gather brown
This maple burn itself away. . . .

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

(2) his playful fancy, as in *The Talking Oak* and *Will Waterproof's Monologue*; and (3) his power of humorous characterisation, as in *The Northern Farmer.* The ethical element in Tennyson is stronger than in any contemporary poet, and is not, as with Browning, merely a constitutive element, but, as with Words worth and Noel, a regulative. To him the struggle for existence resolves itself into the conflict of the more refined and spiritual instincts of human nature with the grosser; and his three principal poems are the record of this strife in its separate phases, the "Idylls of the King" the epic of it, "Maud" its drama, "In Memoriam" its soliloquy and lyrical expression: with this distinction, that in the first, despite the redeeming presence of figures like Arthur, Enid, and Galahad, we have the final triumph of evil—Guenevere gravitating to Lancelot, with other knights and ladies following after their kind, the mockery of the Last Tournament, and the glory of the Round Table no more—while in the last two we have the presentment of a sorrow that at one time threatened madness and despair transformed into the higher feeling by love, by faith, and by the memory of contact with a pure and gentle human soul.

2. The Novel.

A glance at the diagram shows the relation of the leading novelists of the century to each other. The letters underlined show exceptional capacity in the departments in which they occur; and it will be observed that the authors thus distinguished are also those who excel in each of the four departments in question. This divides the artists into two groups, an inner and more powerful, consisting of Dickens and Thackeray, and an outer, consisting of Scott and George Eliot, both

the two former and the latter being inversely symmetrical to each other, or tending to excel in diverse departments. Hence, as Dickens bears the relation to Thackeray that Scott does to Eliot, he bears the relation to Scott that Thackeray does to Eliot; and this divides the novelists into a lower group and an upper, which happens to coincide not only with the distinction between an earlier group and a later, but with a difference in treatment, that may be symbolised by calling the first the Romantic school, the second the Critical.

Romantic School.—**Scott** differs from his successors in the art by the circumstance that while they passed through a period of sketchwork and probation, he knew

no novitiate and served no apprenticeship. When he feared the public interest in his poetry might flag, he turned to *Waverley* as easily as he had turned to the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"; and fortunate for him it was that the new arm, for which he had discarded the old, happened to be the right and not the left; for the Novel was an improvement on the Lay. More dramatic in a sense it was not, nor at any time is Scott's dramatic sense, though remarkable for breadth, distinguished by intensity. Where he has no superior is in the art of minor situation and dramatic narrative. That his expedients are sometimes fanciful, sometimes conventional; that he lends himself too freely to the use of superstition and mystery, of kings and queens as personages of dramatic import, and sieges and tournaments as subjects of dramatic excitement; does not lessen the dramatic significance of his incident, or interfere with that continuity of interest which is the fundamental charm of all composition whatsoever. In stage management no French playwright has ever surpassed him, and no French novelist of the first rank approached him, if to this art of dramatic continuity we add the dramatic symmetry, of which the plots of *Woodstock* and *The Fair Maid of Perth* may be taken as specimens; and to that Scott added the complementary interest of vivid historical association. It is easy enough to see how much of this is superficial, how much eked out from modern sources; but there is no question of the vitality of much of the portraiture, the verisimilitude of their surroundings, or the variety of imaginative insight into all that makes history a matter of political form or social circumstance. His character-drawing is of the Scottish school, the school of Raeburn, Wilkie, and Pettie; and this, which establishes his affinities, suggests his limitations. For the step from these painters to Reynolds, Hogarth, and

Millais is not so great as from the humour of Scott to that of Dickens, or from his drawing of character to that of Thackeray. His work is largely observative, and where it is more than that it has not the plastic power of the English masters. He paints not only on a less monumental scale, but with a coarser brush, and as his Di Vernon and Oldbuck the Antiquary are inferior to Ethel Newcome and Major Pendennis, so his Bonthron and Dousterswivel on the tragic side, his Edie Ochiltree and Dominie Sampson on the humorous, are inferior to Bill Sikes and Denis the Hangman, Mr. Toots and Mr. Micawber. Scott had no ethical purpose in his writings, according to his own confession; but they show a healthiness, a tolerance, and a modesty not always to be found in connection with greater earnestness of aim and public spirit.

To greater earnestness and decision **Dickens** (1812—1870) added greater energy of description, invention, emotion, and style. Intensely histrionic, and sometimes vulgarly theatrical, he has no rival among novelists as a master of dramatic sensation and situation. The death of Ham in *David Copperfield*, and of Sydney Carton in *The Tale of Two Cities*, will occur to every one as specimens. To show his mastery of resource in dramatic effect we have only to take, as instances of Parallelism, the London fog that typifies the Court of Chancery then sitting in the heart of it, or the involuntary suicide of Sikes's dog following upon that of the murderer; as instances of Contrast, Tom Pinch and Pecksniff, Stryver and Sydney Carton, Mr. Chester and Reuben Haredale, the Dorrits in the debtor's prison, and the Dorrits in affluence, Lady Dedlock the leader of fashion, and Lady Dedlock led through the reeking tunnel to the grave of her first and shameful love; as an instance of Gradation, and the art of leading up tone upon tone,

touch upon touch, to some preconceived and by the reader more and more consciously anticipated result, the incidents in *Dombey and Son* preceding and surrounding the death of little Paul, where the humour deepens into pensiveness, and the pensiveness into a pathos that, anticipating Wagner, passes into the inarticulate music of the sea. To Dickens, as to Wagner, the external world, the sea, the night, the tempest, were pregnant with instrumental effect; and what raises him to phenomenal rank as an artist is his power of nature dramatisation and orchestration, as in the mist which does for overture to *Great Expectations*, or the thunderstorm which precedes the murder in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His Humour was a world in itself, pensive, playful, sly, racy, whimsical; startling now by its simplicity, now by its riotous extravagance. No novelist can flash out such sudden humour as Dickens, as in the asides of Sam Weller; in sustained humour, as in the description of the Misses Pecksniff's visit to Mrs. Todgers' boarding-house, no one approaches him; and it is precisely where his humour is most sustained that it is most enjoyable. To represent him as excelling only in grotesque and farcical situations is the error of both his opponents and his admirers; his middle register and *mezza voce* are as good as his low notes and his fortissimo. That he is given to caricature is as evident as that his humour flagged towards the end of his career; but he is one of the great masters of pure Comedy, and if he is false to nature it is because his sense of character is inferior to his sense of humour and effect. If acquaintance with the habits of the lower orders meant knowledge of life, or knowledge of life mastery of character, he would take even higher rank as a psychologist. He had the instinct of a special reporter, joined to the astuteness of the detective, sharpened by inces-

sant practice and stimulated by conscious success; and as a consequence of his singular interest in the habits of professional people drew the public to see them with the same imaginative eye, being actually the means of revealing to many Londoners the existence in their midst of the professional pickpocket with his technical jargon and industrial schools of crime. In character-drawing Dickens alternates between the Universal—as in the broad touches of David Copperfield, describing the development of a mind from boyhood into middle-life, the chapter on his school-days especially calling for remark as a triumph of generalisation—and the Singular, as in his depraved, abortive, hypochondriac, monomaniac, and morbidly eccentric types on the one hand, such as Quilp, Fagin, Miss Havisham, and Miss Flite, and the hilarious and angelic on the other, such as Dick Swiveller and the Brothers Cheeryble. The wisdom of his practical teaching and public spirit, as an irresponsible officer of private inquiry for national purposes, an unsalaried examiner of the civil service, a self-appointed inspector of private schools, has since been expressly recognised by the legislature in the Acts relating to the Poor, to Patents, to Bankruptcy, and Chancery procedure; while as a moralist he overflows with those lessons which are truisms save to the hard and worldly—the duty of respect, confidence, and tenderness to children, dependants, and inferiors, the necessity of honesty in public as in private business, of childlikeness in grown-up people, and of Christmas feeling all the year round.

Critical School.—If technically inferior to Dickens in dramatic power, **Thackeray** (1811—1863) excels in the drama of social and domestic emotion. Becky Sharp receiving the proposal of Sir Pitt Crawley when she is just married to his son, Rawdon Crawley discovering

his wife with Lord Steyne, the appearance of George Warrington in *The Virginians* at the critical moment of his brother's fortunes, the scene in which the Duke of Hamilton insults Henry Esmond, or that in which Laura Bell refuses the man she loves, are a few among the many specimens of Thackeray's refined stage management and relish of dramatic situation. His vein of humour is equally refined, whether in those characters that have the sense of it themselves, like Fred Bayham and Warrington, or those who merely provoke the sense of it in others, like Charles Honeyman and Major Pendennis. In pathos, as in pure character-drawing, he is the greatest of novelists. The greater the artist the more general are his conceptions of the conditions of his art, and Thackeray's instinct leads him to consider character as essentially the algebraic sum of good and evil qualities. Hence according to him there is no such thing as perfection in character, or equilibrium in action, but constant displacement acting in what is at the moment the line of least resistance. Colonel Newcome, for instance, who to the ordinary reader is a perfect gentleman, is expressly represented by Thackeray as a gentleman only so far as his want of humour and imagination will allow him to be, and in spite of certain very evident defects of education and temperament. Similarly, in spite of her exquisite womanliness, we are made to feel the want of charity in Laura Bell. But *per contra* we are led to make the most of the good points in a character so generally bad as Becky Sharp. That she is selfish, avaricious, and treacherous does not prevent her from being good-natured and in her way magnanimous, or Thackeray from using her for his own beneficent purposes, in working out the reconciliation of Dobbin and Amelia, and the restoration of her own husband to a certain level of decorum and respectability.

This, and a similar experience in the case of Harry Foker at the hands of so repulsive a creature as Blanche Amory, are remarkable instances of Thackeray's sense of the Evolution of Character under the influence of its Environment. In Ethel Newcome this principle is seen complicated with the other, the Struggle for Existence in its application to Social Life, of which Becky Sharp is of course a still more obvious illustration, with a position, a house, and a husband to support on the modest income of nothing a year. She is thus predestined to failure from the first; but the psychological explanation of her failure, expressed in biological terms, is this, that the function has all along been factitious, and at last, overreaching itself, succumbs to the social environment. From the ethical side the lesson is evident; and even more sternly ethical is the lesson taught by the death of Mrs. Pendennis, occasioned by a misunderstanding with her son that never would have arisen but for her own injustice in one single instance; so inexorable is the moralist, so summary the lesson that consummate purity avails nothing without the higher gift of charity; though this very important element in Thackeray's genius is precisely of the kind overlooked by moralists of the order of Mr. Ruskin.

The rejoicings in *Adam Bede* on the coming of age of Arthur Donnithorne, coinciding with the news of the arrest of Hetty Sorrel, are a more obvious instance of the same ethical perception in **George Eliot** (1820—1880), and a specimen of the limit of her dramatic capacity. As with Scott all interest is subordinated to the dramatic, so with her all interest converges in the psychological. Even for ethical purposes she is too much of the mere anatomist, and, considering her scientific attainments, it is remarkable that she made so much less use of the results of modern biology than

Thackeray did of those which he discovered for himself before the era of Darwin. The influences she was most interested in exhibiting were those exercised on the organism by its *early* environment, among such more obvious types as Parson Lingon among Tory clergy, Dinah Morris among dissenters, Mr. Brooke among country gentlemen, and Felix Holt among Radicals; and her types were as few as well-defined, relying as she did on the broad distinctions of Church *v.* Dissent, the gentleman *v.* the yeoman and mechanic, the recluse and the student (Silas Marner and Casaubon) *v.* the bustling housewife and shrewd man of business (Mrs. Poyser and Lawyer Jermyn). These distinctions are intellectual rather than moral, and her conception of character, whether moral or intellectual, is generally in relation to the minor scale, minor intellectualities and stupidities, minor virtues and vices, minor aims and mistakes of aim. Where the type of character shows more intensity, as in Adam Bede and Dinah Morris, it is always more or less pathological; and as her tendency to the analysis of morbid character increased, the variety and artistic value of her work diminished. But no theorist of such decided views has treated more tenderly the prejudices of an age he was leaving behind, or been so scrupulous to distinguish the individual from the class; and if her gift is observant rather than creative, her portraiture rather that of the elaborate study than the finished picture, if in a word she is a woman of talent rather than genius, these descriptions of the society and times of which she writes—that critical period between the decay of feudalism and the dawn of European democracy, the drowsy, devoted, old-fashioned English life, deep hidden in green lanes, with its wild-briar touches of awakening heresy, Chartism, radicalism—will survive in the literature from their historical

and general literary interest, though the purely artistic appreciation of the author's workmanship may diminish.

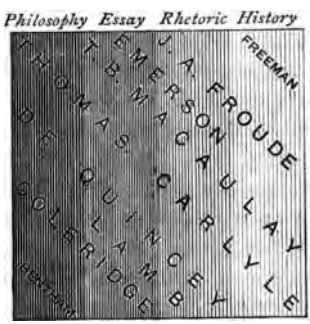
None of these writers can be said to have created a school of fiction, though Thackeray and George Eliot have both left their literary next-of-kin; the first in **Trollope**, whose admirable sketches of English parliamentary club and clerical life, with his constant acute perception of sexual difference in character, entitle him to honourable mention as a student of class habits and social manners; the second in the American school of novelists, with its psychological *motif* and realistic study of the minor types of character and minuter social distinctions of local and cosmopolitan life. **Lytton's** facile, self-conscious, and melodramatic art belongs to himself. But just as below Turner and Rossetti there is the talented and careful work of the Water-Colour Societies, so, though at great distance, beneath Dickens and Thackeray there is a large quantity of contemporary fiction, both feminine and masculine, English and American, interesting from its variety, its ingenuity of construction, its lively style of narrative, its historic romance, its genuine realism, its portraiture of character and observation of social and intellectual phases.

3. The Essay.

The diagram, which indicates the relation of the modern Essay to Philosophy on the one hand and to Rhetoric and History on the other, by exhibiting the number of departments in which any writer is distinguished, follows the historical order from left to right.

Philosophy.—The earlier writers stand in close relation-

ship to the Essayists of the previous age. **Bentham** (1748—1832) is the Adam Smith of Jurisprudence, the first to give the science coherence and significance. In Politics he espoused such doctrines of the Radical programme of to-day as universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and the payment of representatives. In Ethics he adopted and amplified the Utilitarianism of Hume, assuming as the fundamental criterion of the science the Hutchesonian formula of the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number. In his own field Smith was followed by two original writers, **Ricardo**



(1772—1828) and **Malthus** (1766—1834), the first of whom, on the speculative side, established a new theory of Rent, and, in opposition to Smith, assigned Labour as the true ground of Value; the other, on the practical, advocated the propriety of limiting the population to suit their limited means of subsistence; while **James Mill** (1773—1836), author of *The History of British India*, and master of a clear though formal and unimaginative style, added to his studies in Jurisprudence and Economics, where his sympathies were largely with Bentham and Ricardo, his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind.* A utilitarian of a different school

was **Paley** (1743—1805), who, though not an original thinker, is one of our foremost writers of vigorous and idiomatic English.

Philosophy and Criticism.—**Coleridge** (1772—1834) is a philosopher of the literary school; he had read much in the works of the Schoolmen, the Mystics, and the German Metaphysicians, but has contributed very little to ethics or psychology. What knowledge or faculty he possessed he had not the art of making the most use of, or developing systematically; and even in literature his reputation is rather the exoteric one of a man who was a great reader, a great talker, and a great projector of literary schemes, than of a man who has contributed anything permanent or systematic to philosophic criticism, in spite of such acute observations as the following:

> Not the poem which we have read but that to which we return with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power and claims the name of essential poetry; secondly that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction:

an observation which would have been more acute, had it extended to other things besides poetry.

Hazlitt (1778—1830) is the type of the essayist and critic pure and simple: one of that band of *littérateurs*, like **Leigh Hunt** and **Sydney Smith**, **Jeffrey** and **Wilson**, themselves the precursors of a more powerful school of essayists, whose functions were developed and whose means of subsistence substantially increased by the founding of the PERIODICAL REVIEW. He is neither the poet like Coleridge, nor the philosopher like Bentham, nor the historian like Freeman; nor, by way of compensation for these limitations, has he either the rhetorical or critical faculty of De Quincey, Carlyle, and Macaulay. His style is careless, and his criticism, seldom brilliant

and not always accurate, is decidedly at its best where it has to do with personal character, as in his essay on Bentham.

Criticism and Rhetoric.—To the charm of a sweeter individuality **Lamb** (1775—1834) adds the gift of a more complex mind and greater keenness of expression. Not more acute or trustworthy than Hazlitt as a dramatic critic, he has in greater measure the art of suffusing his meditations and descriptions with human interest. His combination of the meditative and descriptive vein makes him the Goldsmith of his generation, and his style is more varied. It is curious in the *Essays of Elia* to find side by side with bits of disquisition which resemble De Quincey, passages of description, as in *The South-Sea House*, which resemble Dickens, and even tricks of expression such as

> Melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter all the forenoon I think I see him making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared every one about him was a defaulter; in his hypochondry ready to imagine himself one; haunted at least with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one;

which remind us of Carlyle. Wit, next to the reflective faculty, is the most important requisite of the essayist, and of that Lamb was a master—not only of wit concentrated and sparkling, but of wit diffusive, and delicate as his peculiar vein of humour.

Landor (1775—1864), who also was a poet, and as much excelled Lamb in scholarship and general reflection as he was inferior in natural elasticity of mind and observation, possessed a similar diffusive style of composition, though with less wit, and much less humour. His *Imaginary Conversations* are unique in literature, not simply as examples of essays in dialogue, a form often adopted to give flavour to abstract discussion, but for the introduction of historical personages.

His mind was not dramatic, nor his sense of character specially acute; but these were precisely qualities which would have diverted his chances of success in that reflective dialogue for which he was specially fitted, and where signal success was only to be obtained by compromise, and subordination of the minor elements to the major. If the felicity of the execution does not quite equal the ingenuity of the conception, this is the fate of most originators, especially in a field so very wide as that which Landor has opened up; the variety of the situations he creates and the significance in the choice of the interlocutors, which stamps the Conversations imaginative as well as "imaginary," are equalled only by the easy dignity of the prose.

Philosophy, Criticism, and Rhetoric.—More elaborate and stately than Landor, **De Quincey** (1785—1859) has also more vivacity and brilliance. It is in virtue (1) of this remarkable combination, (2) of his compass of style, ranging from the purely analytic to the humorous and sublime, and (3) of his distinction of literary manner, that he takes rank as the greatest prose artist in the language. Less brilliant in colour than Ruskin, he has greater mastery of syntax and the subtleties of literary form. His pretensions to literary distinction, which are candidly stated by himself, but with too much moderation, may be redistributed as follows: (1) His capacity for abstract analysis, as shown in *The Logic of Political Economy*, written in sympathy with Ricardo. (2) The inventive humour of essays and sketches like *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts:*

> I set my face against it *in toto*. For if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begin upon this downward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a

man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time.

(3) His descriptive imagination, as shown in *The English Mail Coach* and the *Suspiria de Profundis*, with their singular mastery of imitative and musical effect:

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals —gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense—threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter!—with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing—didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo—farewell love, and farewell anguish—rang through the dreadful *sanctus*.

(4) His historico-critical insight, as shown in his papers on *Style* and *Rhetoric*, on *Cicero* and *The Cesars*, and especially on all subjects connected with Roman customs and constitution. His attempt to identify the Essenes with the primitive Christians is as much of what he calls a crotchet as Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses." But though De Quincey wrote nothing consecutive in the way of history, his immense erudition and profound scholarship, his powers of observation and comparison, his insight into political combinations and institutions, and his power of clear and graphic presentation, marked him out for distinguished success in that field, had his habits of perseverance, impaired probably by the long use of opium, been equal to the clearness of his vision and the incisiveness of his style.

History, Rhetoric, Criticism, Philosophy.—To the industry that was lacking in De Quincey, **Carlyle** (1795—1881) added a singular grasp of detail and enthusiasm for fact. In patient study of his facts and the power of marshalling them in mathematical sequence, he has never been surpassed. His sense of the relative value

of facts was quite inferior. There was no necessity, for example, to write in such detail the life of a man like John Sterling, or to descend so minutely into gossip as he has done in many parts of the *History of Frederic the Great.* Nor would his otherwise indispensable statistical faculty have carried him into this excess, but for the presence of his equally characteristic power of fact-trans figuration. Details which to other men would have appeared hard and trivial, to him became luminous and significant; and to the Teutonic talent for sustained investigation he added the Celtic genius for scenical effect, which makes him the most picturesque and impressive of English historians. His *History of the French Revolution,* which supplies so many examples of this power, presents us also with specimens of his third and most distinctive characteristic as a historian, viz., his constant sense of and sympathy with human effort. Carlyle does not write merely as an interested spectator with a vivid power of spectacular description, much less as an impassive narrator, but as one who is himself participating in every mood and movement he describes, its systole and diastole, its elation and depression; and to whom all human action corporate or individual is a transformation of energy, accomplished under external resistance and therefore with constant friction and disengagement of heat. His own style of composition, as different from the ease of Ruskin's as blacksmith's work from goldsmith's, is singularly in accordance with this sense of effort. But its volcanic force, no more than its mannerisms, Germanisms, and other affectations, should make the student forget the felicity of the diction, the general mastery of the rhetorical art, and the essential sense of rhythm. In instinct for pure grace and beauty Carlyle was deficient; and sympathetic as he was to force of character and talent, the Mirabeaus and Frederics of

history, and even to the benignity and calm of Goethe, he was too deficient in general sympathy to be an impartial critic, though an acute and brilliant one, and his contemptuous opinion of several of his literary compeers has given an offence to many readers that the posthumous revelations as to his domestic life have seemed to justify. Assuming without reason that a man who made so much of heroism must himself be a hero, the public has gone to the other extreme in its animadversion. If in certain minor points of heroism, of tolerance, self-control, and social amenity, Carlyle is deficient, in the major points of earnestness, energy, and self-reliance he is undoubtedly a hero; and his character is reflected in his philosophy. Essentially a man of energy, his fundamental thesis is the Doctrine of Work, that man shall labour and not be idle; a man of essential individuality, and insisting on the government of the weak and base by the wise and good, his second thesis is his Doctrine of Aristocracy, as opposed to what may be called Kenocracy, or government by the empty-headed; and essentially a man of instincts and impressions, he chooses for supreme command in his inevitable hierarchy not the analyst and the reasoner, but the seer, and hence his Doctrine of Vision.

Criticism, Rhetoric, History.—With less ethical conviction but more humanity, less vehemence but more caustic satire, **Macaulay** (1800—1859) offers the nearest parallel to Carlyle as an essayist. Philosophy he has none, save what he has borrowed from Locke and Bacon on the one hand, and the axioms of that Whig politics on the other which to him was the finger of Providence in English history. But that he has decided principles of one sort or other, and on a great variety of subjects, is very evident. He indulges in no paradoxes like De Quincey's, nor does he defend his positions like Carlyle

with mere assertion and reiteration. He chooses his thesis with moderation, and defends it with argument. His style, always vivid in colour and animated in movement, has precisely the amount of thought which stimulates without fatiguing, and of brilliancy which attracts without bewildering, that makes an author popular in the best sense of the term. And this, conjoined with his conception of history as a thing to be studied rather in the character of the principal actors, the manners, light literature, and popular opinion of the time, than in state documents, has made him the most popular of English historians. His historical method is largely pictorial, and as the volumes of his *History of England* appeared they were as eagerly bought up and read as a sensation novel; but it would be as unjust to regard the work, with Carlyle, as a work of fiction, as it would be to assume that his abilities as a conversationalist, an orator, and a statesman have raised him to his present literary position, instead of his own acuteness of thought, original expression, and independence of moral conviction.

Criticism and Rhetoric.—Conspicuous among the minor luminaries who, like Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb, adorn the field made illustrious by De Quincey, Carlyle, and Macaulay, is **Emerson** (1803—1882), the most eminent of American prose writers and literary men. Occupying a special place as a reflective poet, he has that American simplicity of touch which, like the Parisian's taste in dress, gives an air of refinement to the style. His verse, though more obscure and deficient in "the music music-born" than is usual with American poets, has a masculine subtlety and suggestiveness, as in *The Amulet*, that recalls the Elizabethan lyrists, and a philosophic tone, as in *Brahma*, which is neither that of Wordsworth nor Browning. His prose, with its aphoristic and disconnected style, is less introspective.

Life is good only when it is magical and musical, a perfect timing and consent, and when we do not anatomize it. You must treat the days respectfully, you must be a day yourself, and not interrogate it like a college professor. The world is enigmatical—everything said, and everything known or done—and must not be taken literally, but genially. . . . The same rule holds in science. The savant is often an amateur. His performance is a memoir to the Academy on fish-worms, tadpoles, or spiders' legs; he observes as other academicians observe; he is on stilts at a microscope, and—his memoir finished and read and printed—he retreats into his routinary existence, which is quite separate from his scientific. But in Newton science was easy as breathing; he used the same wit to weigh the moon that he used to buckle his shoes; and all his life was simple, wise, and majestic. So was it in Archimedes—*always self-same, like the sky.*

Emerson does not reason any more than Carlyle; he is essentially the seer. The fact that his list of *Representative Men* includes Swedenborg, and does not include any thinker more scientific than Plato, shows that he has less breadth of sympathy than might be expected from his tolerant temper. Distrusting analysis as much as Carlyle, he is in practice less analytic; and a less prejudiced observer, but less intense in conviction, he has the same predominant inclination for subjects of human interest, though with much less ability for dealing with individual character, and this in spite of the fact that he was much less of a recluse.

Thoreau is an imaginative and original writer, whose originality would be more irrecusable did it depend more on imagination and less on fancy. Unquestionably more humane in his sympathies than those who fancied in him only the cynicism of the recluse, and more reflective than those who found in him only the irresponsibleness of the child of nature, he was more of the observer than the systematiser, and more of the artist than the critic. Hence the touch of egotism in his literary manner, as likely to be found in the artist

who shuns society as in one whose vanity leads him to obtrude himself in it; but hence also the charm of his natural description, with its Ruskinian minuteness, the Ruskinian warmth of his protest against the mechanical selfishness of society, and the Ruskinian flash of analysis in dealing with social economics:

We can afford that railroad stock should lose some of its value, for that only compels us to live more simply; but suppose that the value of life itself should be diminished!

Belonging neither to the minority who treat Thoreau as the spoilt child, nor the majority who regard him as the *enfant terrible* of poetic socialism, **Lowell** is too much of the critic and the man of the world to allow his crudities and inconsistencies to pass unchallenged, but too sympathetic not to set his finer qualities in relief. No happier specimens of his criticism than his studies of Thoreau, Lincoln, and Carlyle could be given. Less philosophic than Emerson, he has more brilliance, symmetry, and technical acumen. In wealth of allusion, felicity of metaphor, and incisiveness of statement he excels all American prose writers.

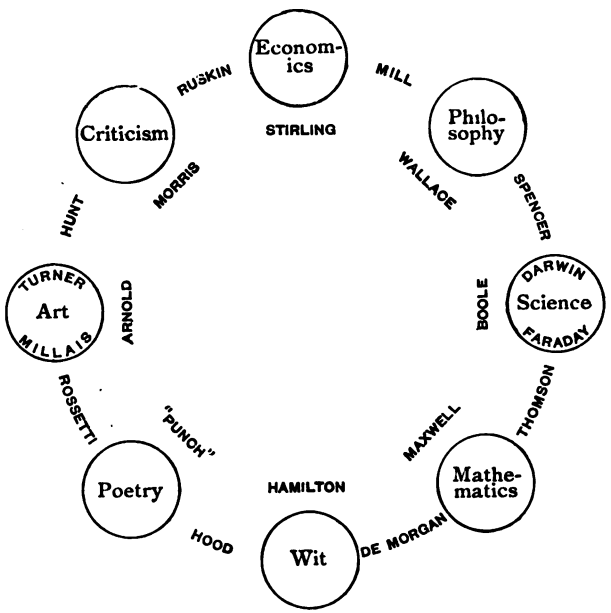
Among the pistillate plants kindled to fruitage by the Emersonian pollen, Thoreau is thus far the most remarkable; and it is something eminently fitting that his posthumous works should be offered us by Emerson, for they are strawberries from his own garden. A singular mixture of varieties, indeed, there is;—alpine, some of them, with the flavour of real mountain air; others wood, tasting of sunny road-side banks or sky openings in the forest; and not a few seedlings swollen hugely by culture, but lacking the fine natural aroma of the more modest kinds. Strange books these are of his, and interesting in many ways—instructive chiefly as showing how considerable a crop may be raised on a comparatively narrow close of mind, and how much a man may make of his life, if he will assiduously follow it, though perhaps never truly finding it at last.

History.—On the historical side Carlyle differentiates into two schools, the rhetorical or Celtic, and the

realist or Teutonic. Of the first the obvious representative is **Froude,** whose easy if sometimes careless style, graphic portraiture, vivid colour, and acute observation are more generally acknowledged than his breadth of judgment or his accuracy in detail. Important sections of general history have been treated by American authors, by **Bancroft** in his *History of the Colonisation of the United States*, by **Prescott** in his *Conquests of Mexico and Peru* and *Ferdinand and Isabella*, and by **Motley,** whose history of the *Rise of the Dutch Republic* may be said in respect of treatment to take a place between Mr. Froude's rhetorical *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth* and the realistic *History of the Norman Conquest* by **Freeman.** Unlike Mr. Froude's, Mr. Freeman's researches have extended beyond the sphere of British into that of general or comparative history, as well as into those sections or phases of it represented by his works on Federal Government, on the Ottoman Turks, and on Sicily. A profound believer in the continuity of history, in the importance of every moral agency that assists its development and of every intellectual aid that is subsidiary to its investigation; a spirited, pertinent, and sometimes brilliant writer, he unites a scholarly manner to the breadth and accuracy of his erudition; as also does **Hallam** (1778—1859), who with **Stubbs** represents the Constitutional element in English history. The method of this school, as it has been described by Mr. Freeman, is analogous to that of Natural History in Science; and parallel with this mode of investigating facts in their organic sequence we have such philosophic works as **Buckle's** *History of Civilisation in England* and **Grote's** *History of Greece.* Of science in relation to history we have an admirable example in **Whewell's** *History of the Inductive Sciences.*

4. Literature in relation to Art and Science.

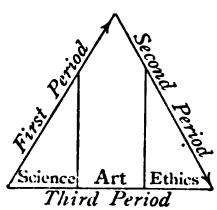
The principal writers in this section are those who connect the departments immediately adjacent to each other, and are arranged on the outer circle of the diagram. Those who form the interior octagon connect



the alternate departments. The treatment embraces the four quarters of the circle in order, Art to Economics, Economics to Science, Science to Wit, and Wit to Art.

1. *Art, Criticism, Economics.*—If the most remarkable characteristic of our Nineteenth-Century literature, as distinguished from that of preceding epochs and of

the Continent, be the combination of a variety of gifts in the same individual, and especially of gifts so diverse as those of Art and Science, then its most conspicuous instance is **John Ruskin**, who is at once wit, prose-poet, artist, art-critic, economist, and man of science; and more than any other author occupies on the spectrum a position complementary to that of Shakspere, being weakest in those sections (drama and psychology) where Shakspere is strongest, and strongest in that of analysis, where Shakspere is weakest. As a writer, he has that unique charm which comes of the clearness of science, combined with the beauty of art and the force of ethics;



as an artist in prose, if wealth of thought and brilliance of diction are considered, he takes precedence of De Quincey; as a critic, he is much superior to any of his predecessors both in respect of delicate observation and analytic skill. His central power is unquestionably that of an Art-critic, as is indicated in the diagram, where its relations to his other faculties are also exhibited in their order of historical development. It is amusing to remark that each stage of his literary career is distinguished by a special form or issue of book.

The first, embracing Natural Science in subordination to Art, is the stage of the Treatise, and of *Modern Painters*. It was here that Ruskin, fresh from Oxford, full of enthusiasm for Turner, and equipped with the

knowledge of nature gained in his botanical and geological studies, began to develop those powers of elaborate and systematic investigation which at once raised him above the level of other critics. To this he added a minute and profound knowledge of technique, quite new in art-criticism, as well as that peculiar method of exegesis, which makes him an expositor first and a critic afterwards. Intending simply a review of the pretensions of modern painters in general and of Turner in particular, as opposed to the ancients, he found himself engaged in a consideration of the relative pretensions of painters of all schools; with the result that Raphael and Michelangelo were subordinated to the artists of Venice, headed by Tintoret. Concurrently with this the pre-Raphaelite school under Millais, Rossetti, and Holman Hunt, appealing alike to his sense of realism and his imaginative mysticism, had attracted his sympathy, with the inevitable result of enlisting his powerful advocacy. Finally, applying to architecture the same canons of Truth and Imagination as against Fancifulness and Dulness, he had no difficulty in establishing the superiority of Gothic to Classical Art in *The Stones of Venice.*

Meantime it was evident that Ruskin's work, in becoming more poetical in treatment, was becoming more human in sympathy and ethical in tone. And the result of this was seen explicitly in the second stage of his literary development, that of the Monograph, or Art in subordination to Ethics; to which belong such works as *The Political Economy of Art*, *The Queen of the Air*, a study of the Greek myths of Cloud and Storm, valuable alike for the subtlety of its interpretation and its ethical applications, *Sesame and Lilies*, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and the more systematic *Unto this Last* and *Munera Pulveris.* It was obvious that if art has any

bearing upon morals, moralists* had been wrong in failing to recognise its economical value as an intrinsic source of Wealth; and this omission led Ruskin to consider that not only was the ordinary conception of Wealth in general vague and inadequate as to theory, but erroneous as to practice, seeing that it referred simply to the *quantity* of what was produced and distributed, leaving the essential point, that of the *quality*, undetermined. His own definition of Wealth is that which contributes to Life, and, taking both factors aforesaid into account, we may express this technically in the formula,

Wealth = Quantity × Quality of what gives Life;

from which Ruskin's theorem, that there is such a thing as a polar opposite of Wealth, may at once be deduced, a negative sign applied to Quality on the right-hand side of the equation making the left-hand side negative.

His third period is that of the Serial, or of Ethics co-ordinate with Art and Science; and comprises such works as *Fors Clavigera*, *Ariadne Florentina*, and *Deucalion*, in which he fills up the interstices of his previous teaching. A man of petulant and uncertain temper, morbid in certain directions, as he is sentimentally commonplace in others, he is nevertheless a man of great benevolence and public spirit—with a keen eye to the practical applications of all matters of theory—and the most spiritual force in modern literature.

Educate or govern, they are one and the same word. Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. And the true 'compulsory education' which the people now ask of you is not catechism but drill. It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers; and then

* With the exception of Berkeley, as already observed; but Ruskin is evidently in ignorance of the fact.

leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work; to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but—above all—by example.

2. *Economics, Philosophy, and Concrete Science.*—A man of humane disposition and extreme candour, **Mill** (1806—1873) is rather an accomplished and enlightened than a profound or exact thinker. His work on Political Economy is chiefly a re-statement and redistribution of the views of older writers, tempered with modern Socialism; as his Logic is chiefly a re-statement, with his own illustrations, of the logic of the Schoolmen, supplemented by the suggestions of **Herschel** and modern inductive science. To formal Logic an important contribution was made by **Hamilton** (of Edinburgh), who developed into its syllogistic applications the so-called *Quantification of the Predicate* discovered by George Bentham and others; contributing also to Psychology, and to Metaphysics a theory of the Unknowable, founded on the finite nature of the human intelligence, and similar to that of Kant. A subsequent contribution to pure Metaphysics, more in harmony with the higher German speculation, and supported with more of the Scottish faculty for metaphysical analysis as well as more literary brilliance and felicity of illustration, is *The Secret of Hegel* by **Stirling**, who was the first to grasp the fundamental principle, or "Notion," of this "great master of the Impenetrable," alike in its logical or statical, and its dialectical or dynamical application, that had escaped the notice of the German philosophers, as well as of Coleridge, De Quincey, and professional metaphysicians like Hamilton and **Ferrier**.

These writers evidently represent the Scottish or abstract side of a philosophy, which on the English or

concrete is represented by **Herbert Spencer**. At his weakest in Metaphysics, where indeed he borrows from Hamilton, he is most profound and suggestive as he approaches the domain of Natural Science. His method, nomenclature, and training are essentially those of the naturalist; and with the same interest in science generally that we find in Comte, to whom his contributions to Sociology have often caused him to be compared, he shows higher ability as a systematiser, and especially as an original investigator. His Psychology is characteristically biological, and, like his contributions to Biology, gives him a special rank as a philosophic naturalist. Not an elegant writer or a sympathetic, he has at times a rhetorical force and rhythm of style, and is unmistakeably of high aims and earnest conviction. His principal power is that of scientific generalisation, of which no better specimen can be given than the treatment in the second part of his *First Principles*, or the fact that he was the first to enunciate a theory of *Evolution* which virtually includes that of **Darwin** (1809—1882) and his distinguished assessor **Wallace**, author of *The Geographical Distribution of Animals*, as an immediate consequence. Of Darwin's own contributions to Zoology, Botany, and Geology it is only necessary to say that they betray in a remarkable degree the capacity for dealing first with complex variations, and secondly with cumulative variations—a capacity in which Ruskin, for instance, is deficient—that is so characteristic of modern concrete science. Not only the nomenclature of such works as *The Origin of Species*, but its mode of regarding facts, have permeated the literature in a manner that has no precedent in scientific history. Upon the theory of Development additional light has been thrown by the inductive researches of **Huxley**, to whose pointed and vigorous exposition is due a

considerable portion of its success in public opinion, and by **Lyell** in his *Principles of Geology*; while younger biologists lay stress upon other factors of organic change, **Mr. Romanes** upon Geographical Isolation and "Physiological Selection," **Mr. Geddes** on the cyclical process of Cell-transformation.

3. *Abstract Science, Mathematics, Wit.*—If with Ruskin we define the science of Wealth as a science of Life, we have only still further to define the science of Life as a science of Energy to bring modern Economics and Biology into touch with those great physical discoveries which, in the hands of **Faraday** and **Joule** on the experimental side, and of **Thomson** and **Maxwell** on the mathematico-experimental, have done so much to uphold the position of England in European science. It may serve to co-ordinate the ideas of the student to remember that the year 1843, which witnessed the appearance of Ruskin in the world of letters, is also approximately the date of three of the chief scientific discoveries of the century, of which the *Conservation of Energy* is one. The second is the mathematical discovery of *Invariants* by **Cayley**. His cramped, laconic style differs—as Browning's from Swinburne's—from the exuberance of **Sylvester**, to whom is due the no small literary feat of supplying the nomenclature of the new theory, and whose very important contributions to that and other branches of the science have recently been crowned by his discovery of *Reciprocants*. **Boole**, the pioneer of Cayley in the same field, is distinguished among English mathematicians for his application of Algebra to Logic, and a method of Logical Substitution as original and ingenious as any discovery in mathematical science. The poetical gift of **Hamilton** (of Dublin), the author of the third discovery in question, the mathematical method of *Quaternions*, is considerably overestimated; his sonnets

and other verse, though clear and fluent, have seldom colour or felicity. The truth is that, though a man of imaginative mind, like Sylvester and Boole, both of whom write tolerable verse, his imagination does not take precisely the poetic form. The poetry of Maxwell takes the form of witty verse. The wit of **De Morgan** takes the form of prose. Inferior as a logician to Boole, and as a mathematician to Hamilton, he is a writer of genuine wit and humour, and *facile princeps* in the art of Mathematical Criticism.

4. *Wit, Poetry, Art.*—Besides much social wit and humour of the day, both in prose and verse, we have that of the leading caricaturists in *Punch*, a journal the conduct of which on the pictorial side, as on the literary, is distinguished among more obvious artistic qualities by those of good taste and common sense. The writer who combines wit with poetry, and with a pathos at once simple and dramatic, is the generous and masculine **Thomas Hood**, the prince of punsters, author of *The Parental Ode* and *The Song of the Shirt*. In his union of these qualities of wit and pathos he may be said to complete the national triumvirate already in part represented by Moore and Burns. For breadth and finish of wit and humour no poet of the day stands so high as Tennyson. Next to him comes **Swinburne**, who is a satirist in prose as well as verse, and not the least successful of whose parodies in the *Heptalogia* is that directed against himself. His qualities as a prose writer resemble those of his poetry; his style is brilliant and impassioned, if at times turgid and bombastic, and his judgment in the case of authors like Hugo and Landor is apt to err on the side of enthusiasm. As an essayist he has contributed exclusively to subjects of poetry and painting, especially to the poetry of the Elizabethan dramatists and of the present

century; and where his sympathies are really engaged his criticism is admirable both for penetration and reserve.

As a writer Swinburne stands in close relationship to two distinct schools—the Poet-Critics and the Poet-Painters. Prominent in the former school, which includes such authors as **Lowell** and **Symonds**, is **Arnold.** As a lyrical and meditative poet, he belongs to the school of Wordsworth; the classic feeling, fluency, and pathetic tenderness of his work are seen at their best in the beautiful poem *Thyrsis*; his *Merope* and *Sohrab and Rustum* are fine poems in the dramatic vein. As an essayist, he belongs to the school of Coleridge and theological Rationalism; equally opposed to dogma and to anarchy in its various forms of Philistinism and Dissent, he seeks to counteract these, not with the system and precision of science, but the influence of Culture; of which moderatism in method, accompanied by corresponding discursiveness in style, the best example is his *Literature and Dogma.* As an accomplished literary critic, his most acute and original observations are to be found in his *Study of Celtic Literature.*

In the category of Poet-Painters the supreme place, whether as painter or poet, belongs to **Dante Rossetti,** the founder and to the last the typical representative of the Pre-Raphaelite School. Between the religious mysticism of **Hunt,** and the realism which eventually led Millais in the direction of portrait-painting, landscape, and the Royal Academy, he maintains the symbolic quietism traditional to Florentine art. And in this light the Italian influence is not only powerful but significant, for Rossetti was Italian by birth. But if it is the five centuries of Italian art separating him from Giotto and Dante that look down upon us from these

canvases, ennobled by English effort and enriched by personal association, his art was no mere inheritance or anachronism: it is the fruit of individual power grafted on an instinct that is older than the Florentines, than the Etruscans, than the Greeks; the pure *sense of animate beauty in contact with the pensive ideal*—animate, for with it landscape is either conventionalised or neglected, and pensive, for with it the athletic or heroic-rampant is expressly forbidden. In the hands of Rossetti it is united with a peculiar subtlety and boldness both of conception and colour, but is always archaic, reserved, and intense. The combination of sensuous impression with spiritual feeling, which is characteristic of his painting, is found also in his Poems, notably the lyrics and the very remarkable series of *Sonnets*; where the melancholy, the archaic feeling, the far-off suggestion, the Italian tenderness, the lingering cadence, lend themselves simultaneously to the interpretation of that mystical yearning for the ideal, that sensitive pride in the Beloved, which have so much in common with the poetic genius of the Celt:

Thou lovely and beloved, thou my love;
Whose kiss seems still the first; whose summoning eyes
Even now, as for our love-world's new sunrise,
Shed very dawn; whose voice, attuned above
All modulation of the deep-bowered dove,
Is like a hand laid softly on the soul;
Whose hand is like a sweet voice to control
Those worn tired brows it hath the keeping of:

What word can answer to thy word—what gaze
To thine, which now absorbs within its sphere
My worshipping face, till I am mirrored there,
Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays?
What clasp, what kiss, mine inmost heart can prove,
O lovely and beloved, O my love!

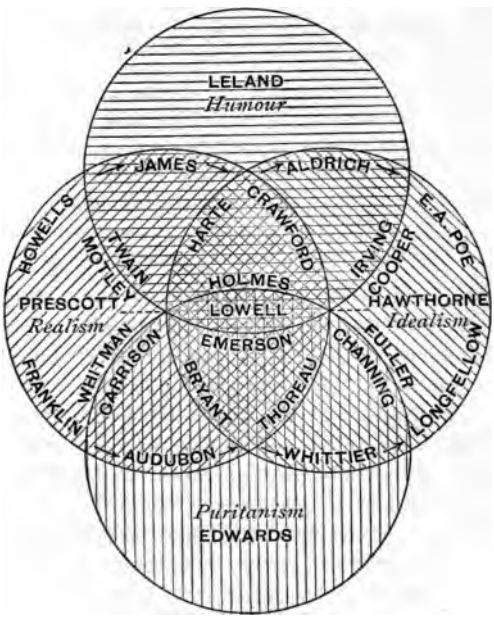
If Rossetti has thus introduced a more direct Italian element into English art than that of Chaucer and the older Renaissance, he would have been the last to claim for himself its sole inspiration, seeing that the same sympathies existed in his contemporaries, to whom may be added the name of **Morris**. Associated with Rossetti and Burne-Jones in the practical effort to provide artistic house-decoration, and head of the firm of upholsterers trading under his name, Mr. Morris has achieved independent distinction as an artist by his mastery of decorative design, in *ensemble* as in detail, his fastidious draughtsmanship, and his subtle harmony of colour. Distinguished for the harmony and clearness of his verse, he has revived portions of ancient legend in his fine epics, *The Earthly Paradise* and *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*, and is one of the most level writers in the literature. As art-critic and socialist, he completes the cycle which begins and ends with Ruskin.

The Prospect.—Whether that cycle be capable of expansion in the direction of individual gift, or of that convergence and synthesis of gifts—realistic and imaginative, literary and scientific—which we have seen to be characteristic of the epoch, is the problem of the immediate future. That for nearly a quarter of a century no new impetus, rising to the rank of a vital impulse, has been given to the Literature, is notorious; and it is equally clear that the taste of the reading public has not improved in the interval. But "sympathetic" as the Age is entitled to be called in virtue of the flexibility, the delicacy, the pertinence and spontaneity of its literary style—the style of Tennyson, Dickens, and Thackeray, of De Quincey, Macaulay, and Ruskin; the style from which Browning and Carlyle fall away on the one hand, as Arnold and Landor on the other—

it is equally sympathetic in relation to the multiplicity of its interests. Comparing it with the Elizabethan, the most convenient of standards, and balancing the Poetry of the one against that of the other, it will be seen that whereas the bias of the former Age is in the direction of the Drama, the present has (1) a double bias, viz., in the direction of Science and Fiction; while (2) it has a distinct superiority, both of variety and power, in the region of Prose-Rhetoric and the Essay. It is at this point of advance, and with its focus shifted from Shakspere to the opposite quarter of the spectrum, that the Literature remains for the present. To some it may be apparent that no essential progress can be made till these two foci are centrally united. To many it may appear that in the region of the Sociological Drama, for that is not the field of Shakspere; of Poetic Fiction, for that is not the field of Thackeray; of Catholic History, for that is not the field of Gibbon; of Catholic Criticism, for that is not the field of Ruskin; of Pure Psychology, for that is not the field of Spencer; of Philosophic Analysis, for neither is that the field of Bacon,—there is still ample room for achievement. To none is there cause for despondency in the future of a Literature that can point to Names like these.

APPENDIX.

Literature of America (1600—1900).



THE American Literature, which differs from the Older primarily in the geographical sense, not the ethnical, social, or intellectual, stands in the same relation to the Literature of our First Period that any child may bear to a parent; to our own of the Second Period—with which it is contemporaneous—in the relation of a sister or a cousin, rejoicing in a common ancestry, but with equal freedom for individual development. A Literature whose

first published work, *True Relation of Virginia*, by an author of no less typical a cognomen than **John Smith**, dates from the year of the birth of Milton; whose second, **Strachey's** *Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates*, is assumed on plausible grounds to have supplied the scenical basis of Shakspere's "Tempest"; and whose character and possibilities were so long since vividly described by Berkeley—

> In happy climes the seat of innocence,
> Where nature guides and virtue rules,
> Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
> The pedantry of courts and schools;
>
> Not such as Europe breeds in her decay,
> Such as she bred when fresh and young
> When heavenly flame did animate her clay—

has had ample time in developing its individuality to maintain its independence—an independence independent of the political, and which, in spite of the increasing interest manifested by America in European art and letters, was hardly ever more decided than it is to-day.

It would be remarkable if in so extensive a period, and with such opportunities as are created by natural affinity, we did not find occasional traces of imitation; that if we find Chaucer borrowing from Italian sources, and Pope from French and Carlyle from German, and, what is more to the point, Scott and Campbell from American, we should not discover works like **Trumbull's** satirical epic *McFingal*, avowedly modelled on "Hudibras," and **Paulding's** *Bull and Jonathan* on the "Tale of a Tub"; and still more remarkable, did we not find involuntary resemblances in individual authors and periods. Not to mention the period of Puritan ascendency, with its analogues to our own Theologians in **Hooker**, **Edwards**, and the **Mathers**, there is the golden age of American Publicism and Oratory, of **Clay**, **Calhoun**, and **Webster**,

synchronising with that of Fox and Burke; its silver age, of **Phillips** and **Garrison**, corresponding to that of Bright and Cobden; and especially its efflorescence in Poetry, Fiction, History, and the Essay, coincident with that of our own Sympathetic Age; while it would be only to obscure by pursuing into too minute detail the parallel between **Franklin** and Faraday, **Audubon** and White, **Draper** and Buckle, **Peirce** and Sylvester, **Emerson** and Carlyle, **Lowell** and Macaulay, **Thoreau** and Ruskin, **Cooper** and Scott, **Bryant** and Wordsworth, **Longfellow** and Tennyson. For **Whitman** it would be impossible to find a proper analogue in any European Literature; while for a nearer comparison of the art of **Hawthorne** and **James** we should have to go to that of Corot and Meissonier.

One obvious point of distinction between the two Literatures is that the American has no Drama; *i.e.*, no Prose-Comedy such as we have between Dryden and Sheridan; and no Poetic Drama such as we have it tentatively in Shelley, Landor, Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, and Tennyson. A second is the comparative absence of Prose-Poetry, as we have it in De Quincey and Ruskin; and the combination of scientific analysis with poetic sensibility, as it is found in the same authors. A third is that in the English Literature, between authors of similar proclivities, like Ruskin and Arnold, Thackeray and Trollope, Byron and Austen, there is much greater diversity of intellectual power. But if, in the fourth place, the American Literature is less complex in style, it has also greater clearness, as of the Transatlantic atmosphere; and if some of its inferior authors are crude in expression, there is little of the exaggerated mannerism which is found in some of our best, like Milton and Swinburne, and reaches affectation in Carlyle and Browning. The chief points of resemblance are those in which all

Literatures resemble each other; the fidelity of local description and the tenacity of historical tradition, the same basis of observation subordinated to the same transforming and energising powers of the imagination and reflection. As in the case of our own post-Reformation struggles, its most important political crises have produced no corresponding body of commemorative literature; even the dramatic interest of the Civil War having produced neither drama nor novel of any importance equal to the indispensable Military Memoirs. The Historians of a country come under a separate category; but it may easily be observed that the proportion of standard works by American Historians on American History, is less than the proportion of works by English Historians on English. More closely allied to its Literature, more certain to find literary recognition and influence literary method, are the life, the social habits, the temperament and intellectual disposition of the people; though it may be observed that the singular energy of the American character, if intensity and force of expression are to be considered its correlative, is inadequately represented in the higher American Literature, which tends rather to the measured, the finished, and the minute, than to the bold and impassioned, to the manner of Boston or New Orleans than of New York and Chicago.

If we assume that the basis of the American character is (1) Puritanism, and (2) its Realism, with a tendency on the part of the first to develop into (3) Idealism, and of the second into (4) Humour, and arrange these as in the diagram, taking Edwards to represent the first, Prescott the second, Hawthorne the third, and Leland the fourth, with the complementary qualities opposite each other, a short examination of the Figure will show:

1. *That the Historical Development of the Literature as a whole follows the order indicated.* In other words, the main line of evolution is vertically upwards from Edwards to Leland. To indicate the manner in which it crosses that line back and forwards, we have only to trace its course from point to point of the exterior intersections of the four circles, adjacent to the names of Franklin, Poe, Longfellow, and Howells, and in that order respectively; when we obtain the following scheme of Historical Succession.

1. Puritanism	Edwards	(1703—1758).
2. Realism tending to Puritanism .	Franklin	(1706—1790).
	Audubon	(1775—1851).
	Bryant	(1784—1865).*
3. Idealism tending to Humour .	Irving	(1783—1859).
	Cooper	(1789—1851).
	Poe	(1811—1849).
4. Idealism tending to Puritanism	Emerson	(1803—1882).
	Hawthorne	(1804—1864).
	Longfellow	(1807—1882).
	Whittier	(1807—1892).
	Thoreau	(1817—1861).
5. Realism tending to Humour .	Motley	(1814—1877).
	Twain	(1835).
	Howells	(1837).
6. Humour	Leland	(1824).

2. *That as the Literature gains or loses in breadth, it gains or loses in intensity: i.e.,* as we proceed along the central line and the diagram widens, the intersections of circles becoming more numerous, the areas of coincidence become darker, till we reach the centre of the figure, when the process is reversed. And in point of historical fact the era of the BOSTONIANS, Emerson, Lowell, and

* Historian as well as poet.

Holmes, in the centre of the figure, flanked on the one side by Prescott, on the other by Hawthorne, and coinciding approximately with the fourth in the previous section, is both for range and intensity the classical or Golden Age of American Literature.

3. *That, among complementary qualities, there is more affinity between the Realism and Idealism of the Literature, than between its Puritanism and Humour;* as typified by the closer approximation of the centres and consequent greater coincidence of area in the case of the first two circles. It would be hard in the American Literature, and precisely in the proportion that it *is* literature, to find a realistic author devoid of idealism, or a romantic of realism. Only the amateur critic does not understand that Imagination is indifferently idealist and realist, and is not found in force where it does not include both. The American who contracts for the rebuilding of his house while it is being burned down is a more practical individual than the Englishman who looks on in a sentimental stupor; but he is a realist precisely because of his superior *imaginative* quickness in foreseeing consequences. Realism is the basis of American as of all other Science, History, and Psychology; but no one finds Franklin devoid of inventive imagination, or Prescott of pictorial, or Howells of human-sympathetic. Similarly Idealism is the basis of American Poesy, Mysticism, and Prose-Romance—of which the diagram shows the Literature to have so large a variety of specimens—but no one finds Longfellow's Blacksmith (whatever may be said of the chestnut) wanting in realism, or the Cent-shop in the *House of the Seven Gables*, or Poe's *Tales*, in so far as realism means circumstantiality of detail: however artfully these details may be contrived to heighten by contrast the predominant sense of mystery. Typical as **Hawthorne** will generally

be considered of American Idealism, it is to him that we turn for touches of the Dutch interior like this:

> A curious eye, privileged to take an account of stock and investigate behind the counter, would have discovered a barrel—yea two or three barrels, *and half* ditto—one containing flour, another apples, and a third perhaps Indian meal. There was likewise a square box of pine-wood, full of soap in bars; also another of the same size, in which were tallow-candles, *ten to the pound*;

while in this other the realism of the preliminary detail is suddenly transfigured by a touch of pure Venetian colour:

> Groceries, toy-shops, dry-goods stores, with their immense panes of plate-glass, . . . and those noble mirrors at the further end of each establishment, *doubling all this wealth by a brightly-burnished vista of unrealities.*

It is the prerogative of **Emerson**, that his idealism is more constantly interpenetrated by realism than in the case of any other American writer; and this gives to his work in the way of character what his mixture of tolerance and independence gives it in the way of tone; it being the secret of his charm and power, that its fancy is kept in check by its observation, and its shrewd common sense enlivened by speculative reflection.

Obviously enough, on the other hand, as its Puritan earnestness and its Humour exist side by side in the American character, the combination is rare in its literary art. Hence the significance of **Lowell** in the diagram, of which he forms the centre; and, it may be added, in general Literature. Other writers may equal or excel him in the opposite poles of Fun and Earnest, or in that satirical Wit which lies between; Dickens may surpass him in the union of the two first, Ruskin in the union of the two last, Butler may rival him in the union of the first and third; but no one equals him in the unison of all three:

Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment ain't to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you. . . .

I dunno but wut it's pooty
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—
But it's curus Christian dooty
This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

To understand the significance of the *Biglow Papers*, one has to imagine a combination of the humour of *Hans Breitmann*, with the satirical and ethical vein of Macaulay. The resemblance to Macaulay, and Lowell's contempt for sentimentalism and hypocrisy, are more marked in his prose, as in his essay on Rousseau, with the incidental *divertissement* supplied by Moore. Nor in tempering the original Puritan severity with a more lambent humour, is the vein less ethical or earnest. On the contrary, becoming less dogmatic and sectarian, it becomes more distinguished by spontaneity and public spirit.

4. *That the weightier authors of the Literature are on the whole the earlier, the lighter the more recent*; the dotted line drawn through the centre of the figure dividing it thus into two equal sections :

Upper.	Historians.	Novelists.	Sketch-Writers.	Versifiers.
Lower.	Publicists.	Scients.	Thinkers.	Poets.

Hence again the significance of Lowell midway between the two, and connecting the more philosophic Emerson with Holmes : a connection which includes both poetry and prose. The various parallelisms, indicated by the arrowheads, etc., *e.g.* the connection of the science of Franklin through Audubon the naturalist with the naturalist and essayist Thoreau—of Bryant, Whittier, and Longfellow—are too obvious to need special notice.

Lyrical Dramatic		Greene Marlowe Shakspere	Jonson	Fletcher	
Idyllic	Drummond	Spenser		Keats Tennyson	*Longfellow*
Metric Dialectical		Davies	Donne Cowley	Browning	*Emerson*
Rhythmic Emotional	Ayton	Surrey	Herrick Crashaw	Shelley	Swinburne
Elevated Didactic	Stirling	Southwell	Milton Herbert	Wordsworth	*Bryant*
Energetic Satirical			Dryden Pope	Byron	
Light Satirical			Prior Gay	Praed	Dobson
Humorous Satirical	Lindsay	Skelton	Swift Butler	Hood	*Lowell*
Natural Descriptive	Douglas	Lydgate	Thomson Dyer	Clare	Faber
Realist	Dunbar	Chaucer	Burns	Buchanan	*Whitman*
Ethical Humanist	Occleve	Gower	Crabbe Cowper	Noel	*Whittier*
Narrative Heroic	Barbour	(Ballads)	Scott Southey		

Conspectus of English Poetry, showing (*a*) *vertically*, its course through the last seven Ages (1350—1900) successively, in its three Stages (denoted by the three columns), first, of Ascent, from Barbour to Shakspere, second, of Decline, from Shakspere to Southey, third, of Re-ascent, from Southey to Tennyson—from which it will be seen that the curve is a cycloid, tending at the present moment to the Dramatic; (*b*) *horisontally*, the affinities of a number of Authors occupying the same isopathic lines, independently of intrinsic power, Age, School, or Nationality; and the Table may be extended in both directions. The names in faint type are Scottish, in italics American.

INDEX.

ABS

Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden's, 144.
Addison, Joseph, 158.
" Adjective " Authors, 78.
Aelfric, 18.
Akenside, Mark, 164.
Aldrich, Thomas B., 233.
Alexander and Campaspe, Lyly's, 94.
Alfred, King, 16.
All for Love, Dryden's, 145.
Alliterative Poetry, 10.
Ancren Riwle, Poor's, 25.
Andrews, Lancelot, 131.
Anglo-Norman Literature, 18-30.
Anglo-Saxon Literature, 10-18.
Arcadia, Sidney's, 70.
Arnold, Matthew, 229.
Ascham, Roger, 72.
Atterbury, Francis, 137.
Audubon, James, 235, 240.

B.

Bacon, Francis, Lord Verulam, 75-8.
— Roger, 23.
Balades, Gower's, 32.
Ballads, Rhyming, 32.
Bancroft, George, 220.
Barbour, John, 42.
Barrow, Isaac, 134.

BUR

Beattie, James, 164.
Beaumont, Francis, 107.
Beaux' Stratagem, Farquhar's, 155.
Bede, The Venerable, 15.
Bentham, George, 225.
— Jeremy, 210.
Bentley, Richard, 136.
Beowulf, Song of, 10-12.
Berkeley, George, 181.
Biglow Papers, Lowell's, 228, 240.
Blackfriars Theatre, 88.
Blair, Hugh, 180.
Blake, William, 169.
Bloomfield, Robert, 166.
Bohemianism, Stage, 89.
Boole, George, 227.
Boswell, Alexander, 188.
Bourne, Robert of, 21.
Boyle, Charles, 137.
Bracton, Henry, 23.
Brothers, Shirley's, 112.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 130.
Browning, Elizabeth, 196.
— Robert, 196-8.
Bruce, Barbour's, 42.
Brut, Layamon's, 20.
Bryant, William C., 199, 241.
Buchanan, Robert, 241.
Buckingham, Duke of, 146.
Buckle, Henry Thomas, 220.
Bunyan, John, 129.
Burke, Edmund, 178-80.

Burnet, Gilbert, 136.
Burns, Robert, 168.
Burton, Robert, 80.
Butler, Joseph, 182.
— Samuel, 142.
Byron, Lord, 191.

C.

Caedmon, 12-14.
Calhoun, John C., 234.
Campbell, George, 180.
— Thomas, 169.
Canterbury Tales, Chaucer's, 35-40.
Carew, Thomas, 118.
Carlyle, Thomas, 214-16.
Caxton, William, 52.
Cayley, Arthur, 227.
Celtic Element in the Literature, 1-4.
Channing, W. E., 233.
Chapman, George, 61, 106.
Characters, Overbury's, 80.
Chatterton, Thomas, 169.
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 34-40.
Cheke, Sir John, 72.
Clarendon, Earl of, 136.
Clarke, Samuel, 138.
Clarissa Harlowe, Richardson's, 173.
Clay, Henry, 234.
Coleridge, Samuel T., 194, 211.
Collins, William, 169.
Complaynt to the King, Lindsay's, 49.
Confessio Amantis, Gower's, 33.
Congreve, William, 154.
Cooper, J. Fenimore, 235.
Country Parson, Herbert's, 121.
Cowley, Abraham, 117, 130.
Cowper, William, 164.
Crabbe, George, 166.
Crashaw, Richard, 123.
Crawford, F. Marion, 233.
Cynewulf, 14.

D.

Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins, Dunbar's, 47.
Daniel, Samuel, 67.
Darwin, Charles, 226.
Decameron, Boccaccio's, 33, 34.
Defense of Poesy, Sidney's, 71.
Defense of the English People, Milton's, 126.
Defoe, Daniel, 156.
Dekker, Thomas, 80, 109.
De Morgan, Augustus, 228.
De Quincey, Thomas, 213.
Dickens, Charles, 203-205.
Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy, Fortescue's, 51.
Discoveries, Jonson's, 105.
Donne, John, 115, 132.
Douglas, Gavin, 48.
Draper, J. W., 235.
Drayton, Michael, 67.
Drummond, William, 68.
Dryden, John, 143-6.
Dunbar, William, 45-8.
Dunciad, Pope's, 150.
Dyer, John, 166.

E.

Ealdhelm, 14.
Ecclesiastical Polity, Hooker's, 79.
Edwardes, Richard, 88.
Edwards, Jonathan, 181, 234.
Edward the Second, Marlowe's, 92.
Eikon Basilike, Gauden's, 126.
Eikonoklastes, Milton's, 126.
Elene, Cynewulf's, 14.
Eliot, George, 207.
Emerson, Ralph W., 217, 239.
Epithalamion, Spenser's, 66.
Erigena, Johannes Scotus, 17.
Essay on Criticism, Pope's, 149.
Essay on Man, Pope's, 150.

Essays, Bacon's, 78.
Etherege, Sir George, 152.
Euphuism. 75.
Evelyn, John, 135.

F.

Fables, Henryson's, 43, 45.
Faerie Queene, 62-6.
Faraday, Michael, 227.
Farquhar, George, 155.
Fergusson, Robert, 169.
Ferrier, James, 225.
Fielding, Henry, 173-5.
Fletcher, John, 61, 107.
Flytin' of Dunbar and Kennedy, 47.
Ford, John, 110.
Fortescue, Sir John, 51.
Fox, Charles James, 177.
Francis, Sir Philip. 177.
Franklin, Benjamin, 235, 238.
Freeman, Edward A., 220.
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, Greene's, 90.
Froude, James A., 220.
Fuller, Margaret, 233.
— Thomas, 134.

G.

Garrison, W. Lloyd, 235.
Gay, John, 147.
Geddes, Patrick, 227.
Gibbon, Edward, 186-8.
Glanville, Ralph, 23.
Gloucester, Robert of, 21.
Goldsmith, Oliver, 171.
Gorboduc, Sackville and Norton's, 87.
Gower, John, 32-4.
Grattan, Henry, 177.
Gray, Thomas, 169.
Greene, Robert, 60, 90.
Grote, George, 220.
Guardian, The, 157.
Guildford, Nicholas de, 21.

H.

Hall, Joseph, 80.
Hallam, Henry, 220.
Halley, Edmund, 138.
Hamilton, Sir William, 225.
Hamilton, Sir W. Rowan, 227.
Handlyng Synne, Manning's, 22.
Harrington, James, 140.
Harte, Bret, 233.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 238.
Hazlitt, William, 211.
Henryson, Robert, 43-5.
Herbert, George, 120.
Hero and Leander, Marlowe's, 61.
Heroic Stanza, 40.
Herrick, Robert, 119.
Herschel, Sir John, 225.
Heywood, John, 85.
— Thomas, 112.
Hill, Aaron, 150.
Histories, Bede's, 15; Alfred's, 17; Henry of Huntingdon's, 22; William of Malmesbury's, 22; Orderic's, 23; Raleigh's, 70; Clarendon's and Burnet's, 136; Robertson's, Hume's, and Gibbon's, 186; Carlyle's, 215; Macaulay's, 217; Froude's, Bancroft's, Prescott's, Motley's, Freeman's, Stubbs's, Hallam's, Grote's, Buckle's, Whewell's, 220.
Hobbes, Thomas, 138.
Holmes, O. Wendell, 237.
Holy and Profane States, Fuller's, 134.
Homilies, Aelfric's, 18; Orme's, 24.
Hondreth Good Points of Husbandrie, Tusser's, 59.
Hood, Thomas, 228.
Hooker, Richard, 78-80.
— Thomas, 234.
Horace, Bentley's, 137.
Howells, W. D., 238.
Hudibras, Butler's, 142.

Hughes, Thomas, 88.
Human Understanding, Hume's, 185.
— Locke's, 139.
Hume, David, 185.
Hunt, Leigh, 211.
— W. Holman, 229.
Huntingdon, Henry of, 22.
Hutcheson, Francis, 180.
Huxley, Thomas R., 226.

I.

Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue, Hutcheson's, 180.
Interlude, The, 85.
Irving, Washington, 233.

J.

James, Henry, 235.
James I. (of Scotland), 43.
Jean de Meung, 35.
Jeffrey, Francis, 211.
Johnson, Samuel, 188.
Jonson, Ben, 61, 81, 104.
Joseph Andrews, Fielding's, 174.
Joule, James Prescott, 227.
Junius Letters, 177.

K.

Kames, Lord, 180.
Keats, John, 193.
Kennedy, Walter, 47.
King, Henry, 120.
King David and Fair Bethsabe, Peele's, 93.
King's Quhair, 43.

L.

Lamb, Charles, 212.
Landor, Walter S., 212.
Langley, William, 26-8.
Latimer, Hugh, 72.
Layamon, 20.
Lee, Nathaniel, 152.
Leland, C. G., 233.
Leviathan, Hobbes's, 139.
Lindsay, Sir David, 49.
Lives of the Poets, Johnson's, 188.
Locke, John, 139.
Lodge, Thomas, 60.
Longfellow, Henry W., 199, 238, 241.
Lovelace, Richard, 118, 119.
Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe, Peele's, 93.
Lowell, James R., 219, 239.
Lydgate, John, 41.
Lyell, Sir Charles, 227.
Lyly, William, 74, 93.
Lytton, Lord, 209.

M.

Macaronic Verse, 42.
Macaulay, Lord, 216.
Macpherson, James, 169.
Malory, Sir Thomas, 53-5.
Malmesbury, William of, 22.
Malthus, T. R., 210.
Mandeville, Sir John, 50.
Manning, Robert of Bourne, 21.
Marlowe, Christopher, 67, 91-3.
Marston, John, 111.
Massinger, Philip, 109.
Mather, Cotton, 234.
— Increase, 234.
Maxwell, James Clerk, 227, 228.
Middleton, Thomas, 106.
Mill, James, 210.
— John S., 225.
Milton, John, 125-9.
Miracle-Play, 83.
Mirror for Magistrates, 58.
Monasteries, 12, 25.
Monmouth, Geoffrey of, 19.
Moore, Thomas, 169.
Moral Essays, Pope's, 150.
Moral Plays, 84.
More, Sir Thomas, 74.
Morris, William, 198, 231.
Mort d'Arthur, Malory's, 53-5.

Motley, John L., 220.
Mummery, 83.
Mystery-Play, 83.

N.

New Way to Pay Old Debts, Massinger's, 109.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 138.
Noel, Hon. Roden, 196.
Norton, Thomas, 87.
Novum Organum, Bacon's, 77.

O.

Occam, William of, 24.
Occleve, Thomas, 41.
Oceana, Harrington's, 140.
Orderic, 22.
Orm, 24.
Ossian, Macpherson's, 169.
Otway, Thomas, 152.
Overbury, Sir Thomas, 80.
Owl and Nightingale, De Guildford's, 21.

P

Paley, William, 210.
Pamela, Richardson's, 173.
Panther and Hind, Dryden's, 144.
Paradise Lost, 126-8.
— Bentley's, 136.
Pastoral Poets, 59-66.
Pastorals of Philips, 147.
— of Pope, 149.
Paulding, J. K., 234.
Pecock, Reginald, 52.
Peele, George, 93.
Peirce, Benjamin, 235.
Pensive School of Poets, 115-128.
Pepys, Samuel, 135.
Perkin Warbeck, Ford's, 110.
Phalaris, Bentley's, 137.
Philaster, Beaumont and Fletcher's, 108.
Philips, Ambrose, 147.
Phillips, Wendell, 235.
Piers Plowman, Langley's, 26-8.
Pilgrim's Progress, 129.
Pitt, William, 177.
Poe, Edgar A., 238.
Polyolbion, Drayton's, 67.
Poor, Richard, 25.
Pope, Alexander, 147-52.
Prescott, W. H., 220.
Principia, Newton's, 138.
Prior, Matthew, 146.
Prologues of Douglas, 48.
Punch, 228.

Q.

Quarles, Francis, 122.
Querist, Berkeley's, 181.

R.

Raleigh, Sir Walter, 70.
Ralph Roister Doister, 86.
Rape of the Lock, 150.
Religio Medici, Browne's, 130.
Repressor, Pecock's, 52.
Revenger's Tragedy, Tourneur's, 111.
Review, Defoe's, 157.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 180.
Rhetoricians, 130-34.
Ricardo, David, 210.
Richardson, Samuel, 173.
Riddles, Cynewulf's, 14.
— Ealdhelm's, 14.
Robertson, William, 186.
Robinson Crusoe, 156.
Rogers, Samuel, 167.
Rolle, Richard, 25.
Roman de Brut, Wace's, 20.
Romances, French, 19.
Romanes, George J., 227.
Romeo and Juliet, 97.
Rood, Caedmon's, 14.
Rossetti, Dante, 198, 229
Ruskin, John, 222-5.

S.

Sackville, Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, 56, 58, 87.
Sanderson, Robert, 131.
Satires, Pope's, 151.
Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, Lindsay's, 49.
Savage, Richard, 150.
Saxon Chronicles, 17.
Scholemaster, Ascham's, 72.
School for Scandal, Sheridan's, 170.
Scott, Sir Walter, 168, 201-203.
Scotus, Duns, 24.
Seasons, Thomson's, 166.
Sententious Poets, 162-70.
Shaftesbury, Earl of, 182.
Shakspere, William, 61, 94-103.
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 192.
Shenstone, William, 166.
Shepheards Calender, Spenser's, 62.
Sheridan, Richard B., 170.
Sherlock, William, 131.
She Stoops to Conquer, Goldsmith's, 171.
Shirley, James, 112.
Sidney, Sir Philip, 69-72.
Sir Charles Grandison, Richardson's, 173.
Skelton, John, 42, 85.
Smith, Adam, 183.
— John, 234.
— Sydney, 211.
Smollett, Tobias G., 175.
Sonnets, Spenser's, 66; Drayton's, 68; Drummond's, 68; Sidney's, 69; Shakspere's, 102; Rossetti's, 230.
South, Robert, 133.
Southey, Robert, 167.
Spectator, 157.
Spencer, Herbert, 225.
Spenser, Edmund, 62-7.
Steele, Richard, Sir, 157.
Sterne, Laurence, 176.
Stirling, James H., 225.
Strachey, William, 234.
Stubbs, William, 220.
Sublime and Beautiful, Burke's, 179.
Suckling, Sir John, 118.
Surrey, Earl of, 56, 57.
Swift, Jonathan, 160.
Swinburne, Algernon C., 198, 228.
Sylvester, J. J., 227.
Symbolism, Artistic, 65.
Symonds, John A., 229.
Sympathetic Poets, 190-200.

T.

Taliesin, 9.
Task, Cowper's, 164.
Tatler, 157.
Taylor, Jeremy, 132.
Temple, William, 138.
Tennyson, Alfred, 199.
Testament of Cresseid, Henryson's, 43-5.
Teutonic Element in the Literature, 1-4.
Thackeray, William M., 205-207.
Theobald, Lewis, 150.
Theory of Moral Sentiments, Smith's, 183
Thistle and Rose, Dunbar's, 46.
Thomson, James, 165.
— W., Lord Kelvin, 227.
Thoreau, Henry D., 218.
Thoughts on the Present Discontents, Burke's, 179.
Tickell, Thomas, 147.
Tillotson, John, 131.
Tom Jones, Fielding's, 174.
Tourneur, Cyril, 111.
Tristram Shandy, Sterne's, 176.
Trumbull, John, 234.
Tusser, Thomas, 59.
Twain, Mark, 228.

U.

Udall, Nicholas, 86.
Utopia, More's, 74.

V.

Vanbrugh, Sir John, 155.
Vaughan, Henry, 122.
Venice Preserved, Otway's, 152.
Venus and Adonis, Shakspere's, 61.
Vicar of Wakefield, 172.
Vox Clamantis, Gower's, 33.

W.

Wace, 20.
Wallace, Alfred R., 226.
Waller, Edmund, 117.
Wallis, John, 138.
Walton, Isaac, 135.
Way of the World, Congreve's, 154.
Wealth of Nations, Smith's, 183.
Webster, Daniel, 234.
— John, 111.
Whewell, William, 220.
Whitman, Walt, 199, 235.
Whittier, John G., 233, 241.
Wiclif, John, 28-30.
Wilson, John, 211.
— Sir Thomas, 71.
Winter's Tale, 98.
Wither, George, 118.
Wordsworth, William, 194.
Worthies of England, Fuller's, 135.
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 56.
Wycherley, William, 153.

Y.

Young, Edward, 163.

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